没落予定なので、
鍛冶職人を目指す
2
著◆CK
絵◆かわく
カドカワBOOKS

没落予定なので、
鍛冶職人を目指す
2
著 CK
絵 かわく
カドカワBOOKS

Botsuraku Youtei Nanode, Kajishokunin wo Mezasu - Volume 02 (WN Chapter 21-40)

Table of Contents

1. Volume 2 Illustrations (Spoilers) (Incomplete)
2. Chapter 1
3. Chapter 2
4. Chapter 3
5. Chapter 4
6. Chapter 5
7. Chapter 6
8. Chapter 7
9. Chapter 8
10. Chapter 9
11. Chapter 10
12. Chapter 11
13. Chapter 12
14. Chapter 13
15. Chapter 14
16. Chapter 15
17. Chapter 16
18. Chapter 17
19. Chapter 18
20. Chapter 19
21. Chapter 20

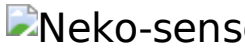
Volume 2 Illustrations (Spoilers) (Incomplete)

LN Cover:

818fllbsufl

Self-Drawn Illustrations:

Untitled-2


Neko-sensei sketch

Chapter 1

Today, my school life begins.

I got up early today to make sure my uniform was in order.

You see, the uniforms have a simple design that uses the colour white as their base, while more expensive decorations accented other areas. These truly are uniforms created for a school centered around the nobility.

I confirmed my appearance in front of the mirror one last time. Standing tall with a skinny disposition, yet still having decent muscles, the uniform looked good on me if I do say so myself.

“Yeah, this is good.”

Kururi Helan.

Today is the beginning of the fate I resolved myself for three years ago.

As I passed through the door of my apartment there were two people waiting for me, each wearing a uniform of their own.

“Let’s go.”

“Yeah,” “Yes!”

* * *

Elenoire Academy.

When looking at the school building from a bird’s-eye view, it seems to take on the form of the katakana for Russia(□).

I heard that it has a vast garden surrounded by buildings. If it’s true, it would probably make a good spot to hang out during lunch or after school.

Truly, a land for the rich!

The east side of the school is where the majority of the classrooms are, it’s also the area where the students hang out the most.

We study the required courses in the base classes, which are divided from letters ‘A’ to ‘J’.

The north side of the school holds all of the rooms for the practical electives, while just outside it is the school field used for activities and events.

It’s a big field!

I heard that there are even classes where you cultivate your own medicinal plants in the classrooms, but hey, it’s a big school I wouldn’t be surprised if there were.

Since I’m on the topic, the south side of the school holds the library that Iris is fond of, while the west side are rooms that students can use for individual reasons.

It’s good to know these things if you want to live a healthy school life.

… and once we finally arrived at school, the class roster was there to greet us.

As expected, Vaine and I were placed into the A-class.

Crossy however, was unfortunately placed into the C-class.

Its feels a little lonely to be divided so soon.

The school was created in the arrangement that the first years were on the third floor while the third years were on the first floor.

The A class was the one closest to the stairs, while the J class was in the back.

There were already a few students in class when we entered.

I looked around, but neither Eliza nor Iris seemed to be here yet.

Our seats were already pre-determined, while I was placed in the back left-hand corner, Vaine was seated in the back

right-hand corner.

Vaine couldn’t help but insist that we were intentionally seated this way for some reason.

I don’t really think so though.

The students eventually started flowing in in droves, all taking their respective seats once class started.

Eliza’s in the second seat from the front of the third column to the right.

We’re a bit far from each other.

Well, I can still see her from where I am so it’s not all bad.

Eventually somebody not wearing a uniform entered finally starting homeroom.

“Ah.”

It was the Phys-ed instructor from the physical exam, I think his name was Wu or something like that.

“Everyone, my name is Mitchell Wu and I’m going to be serving as your teacher for the next year, nice to meet you guys. Its an honour to be the one to teach the outstanding A-class.”

Wu-sensei was the slender-but-handsome kind of guy, wearing his hair in a ponytail and all that.

Although I've only seen him twice myself, he seems to only wear clothes made for exercise for some reason.

Wu-sensei's lecture had started, but it was only the schedule for what we were doing today.

"Before anything else is the entrance ceremony, and do try to enjoy it please, just being accepted here is something that you should celebrate, no? After that return to the classroom, and I'll give an explanation of how the school class system works."

Once his lecture was over, Wu-sensei led us to the meeting place on the north side of the school.

The freshmen steadily gathered from the beginning of A-class to the end of the J-class.

We were gathering at the event grounds outside, but I think the entrance ceremony was going to be held in one of the other buildings like the gymnasium.

Nobody wants to just stand outside, and it could even be freely decorated if it were held there.

For the aristocracy it’s not an exaggeration to say that this is the most auspicious day to attend school, while expecting a grand welcome.

Two burly men standing at the entrance to the assembly halls opened the gates.

“Congratulations on your admission!”

Overflowing cheers erupted from the opened gates.

A grand welcome created by our upperclassmen.

The road to the hall was adorned with the flowers planted yearly, giving off a gorgeous view while inside the ceilings and walls were all decorated with bright and sparkling ornaments.

It was beautiful.

My heart was grasped by the hospitality that far exceeded my expectations.

I wasn’t the only one making a stupefied face, everyone else in the first-year was too.

“Wow.”

I turned my neck to get a good look at the surroundings.

It’s been awhile since I rejoiced so purely.

The flower-path continued on inside, leading up to a group of chairs where the first-years took their seats.

“Everyone, what a fine day it is today.”

The person who was talking was an old man who seemed to have lived a splendid amount of years.

“I am the principal of this school, Aidan Maurice and I would like to congratulate all of you from the bottom of my heart on your admission.

While it may be nice to sit down and relax with crossed legs, I would like to think that you would prefer to strive for the best in your studies during your next three years here.

Now that’s enough from an old man like me, so please enjoy this next event created by your upperclassmen just for you.”

The freshmen raised up cheers of joy.

Their exhilaration just didn’t seem to have an end.

As if he had wings, a young man jumped out over the crowd, landing at the podium and raised his voice.

“Now let’s party!”

With the make-up he had on, I guess they were going to do something like circus.

* * *

Song, dance, and games, once all the events were done the entrance ceremony came to a close with a large sense of satisfaction.

That was a great experience, and with this the first year of my school life begins.

It’s a good tradition, I wonder if we’re going to make something this great next year?

Everyone continued talking about the entrance ceremony on the way back to the classroom.

I mean, how could we not?

“Excuse me…”

A voice suddenly called out to me from behind, it was a girl.

“You’re Kururi Helan right?”

“Yeah?”

The girl hugged her waist with her arms, while her eyes seemed to sparkle a little.

“I knew it! I-I’m a fan of Kururi-san afterall!”

A fan?! I have fans?!

Why do I have fans?! I don’t remember doing anything worth remembering…

“Oh umm… yeah, and your name was?”

“My name is Heart Valentine.”

The eyes of the girl who named herself as Heart seemed to be in some sort of trance, and try as I may, I couldn’t keep my drooping eyes from taking a quick look at her chest which seemed to be one of her defining characteristics.

“I’ve heard rumors about you. You’re one of the student’s that almost got a perfect score in the placement test, while also being a prodigy in magic studies.”

“Well…”

I couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed at being praised so straight forwardly. I scratched my head that suddenly felt itchy for some reason.

“Not to mention you’re also the next in line to become the lord of the Helan territory, isn’t that unfair? Some people just have all the luck.”

“Well, you’re probably not too bad yourself to be smart enough to get into the A-class Heart-san.”

“I-I guess.”

We shook hands as she panicked a little.

“In just the first grade there’s now Kururi-san, Prince Arc, Rail-san, and Eliza-san, y-you’re going to be the school’s Miracle Four! People on a whole other dimension from us ordinary folk.”

What’s with that name?! Please stop! It’s too embarrassing!

“Where did you hear such a story?”

“I’m not sure, but I do know that your fan club won’t lose anyone else’s, not even to Prince Arc’s.”

“I never wanted to compete in such a thing in the first place.”

“Really?”

Heart seemed to be a bit depressed at my response.

“Don’t be sad, students should focus on their academics instead of fan-clubs right?”

“Okay, now everyone get into your assigned seats!”

Wu-sensei came at the perfect time.

That wasn’t a nice mood I had going on there, so I’d rather avoid it if possible.

“I hope you all enjoyed the entrance ceremony, and you all strive in your studies. Now then, let’s begin the description of the class system.”

Although the lecture was long, I was able to get the gist of it in my notes.

We have four required course we have to take:

Advanced Arithmetic

Magic Science

Swordplay

History

Everyone in the A-class have received these, because they’re subjects we must absolutely take.

Then there are four other electives that we can choose from a list with fifteen items:

Accounting, Chemistry

Psychology, Geology,

Astronomical Science, Architecture,

Animal Husbandry, Medical Science,

Herbalism, Emperor Studies,

Astrology, Martial Arts,

Philosophy, Law, and Biology.

These are subjects held jointly with other classes.

We’re supposed to lock them in within two weeks, and as of right now I’m a little interested in herbalism.

After thinking about it a bit more, I’ll figure out what else I want to take.

* * *

“Pass down the documents so that everyone can have a look at what electives they can choose, and that should be it for the day. I’d recommend that you try exploring the school a bit while its daylight. Class dismissed.”

Wu-sensei vigorously left the classroom.

He sure does give off a refreshing feeling.

“Kururi-san.”

The same moment Wu-sensei left, Heart called out to me again.

“What is it?”

“Are you going to join any of the extracurricular clubs?”

“Oh, I guess that does sound nice.”

“Yeah, but I haven’t made a decision yet on which to join.”

“Yeah?”

I wonder what clubs they have here…

Soccer maybe? I don’t know.

“Why don’t you make a club then? Of course the president will be Kururi-san.”

“They’re that easy to make?”

“Yeah, as long as you get the numbers required for it.”

“I haven’t even decided what I’d do, and would it really be that easy to gather members?”

“I’m sure it would be as long as we used your name Kururi-san, just give me a moment.”

Heart took out a pen and began to write a letter on a blank sheet of paper she took from somewhere.

It gave off a good and rhythmic sound.

“Is anyone interested to join a club created by the one and only Kururi Helan?!! Those interested meet at the courtyard, but be quick! We’re taking applications at 4pm!!”

“…aren’t you a bit too fired up about this?”

“I only spoke the truth.”

“I haven’t even decided if I was going to make one or not.”

“…oh yeah.”

“Oh yeah?!”

I couldn’t help but yell in response.

* * *

Heart stuck her self-made poster in the hallway bulletin board, then we moved to the courtyard together.

The courtyard was covered in a well maintained lawn, with a fountain in the center of it all.

This was the kind of place you’d want to eat lunch on a sunny day.

“I hope we get a lot of applicants.”

Heart said while sitting down.

I replied as I sat down as well.

“I guess.”

I didn’t feel comfortable enough so I decided to lay down instead.

The tingling sensation of the grass feels great, I think I might fall asleep at this rate.

“Kururi Helan’s club applicants are supposed to gather here right?”

…or not.

To the side from where I was laying, came a young man whose face I haven’t seen before.

“Ah, yeah.”

I was a little surprised that one would come so soon.

Thanks for coming I guess.

After that people started to come in droves, way past the four o’clock appointment.

Heart started taking a roll call.

One, two, three… forty-seven, forty-eight!

“Kururi-san, there are forty-eight people gathered here including myself.”

Forty-nine if I’m included too.

This is way too many.

I can’t manage this many people!

Vaine and Crossy weren’t here either, maybe they were doing special training with each other again?

Heart stood in front of everyone, and took a deep breath.

“Forty-eight people have gathered here today for Kururi Helan. Will you not swear absolute loyalty to him?!”

“” “” Oh! “” “”

“If after joining you dare to betray Kururi Helan, will you be ready to receive your deserved punishment?”

“” “” Oh! “” “”

“Now everyone! Bow to Kururi Helan-dono, your new leader!”

Everyone quickly bowed at once.

What the hell is this?!

I thought this was just going to be a club where I could spend my days leisurely with a few friends!! How did it turn to this direction?!

Clubs aren’t supposed to be this way!!

Aren’t they a bit loud too?! They’re all yelling!

As if slapping me in the face, they all yelled “Osu!” at once.

“Kururi-san, please enjoy this club we’ve created for you but we’ll need something to distinguish us from everyone else.”

…Well, there are the swords I’ve produced in mass quantities…

I should just be able to cover everyone with my stock…

“…I guess I could give everyone a sword I’ve smithed personally.”

“Thank you, now let’s be off to claim the funds from the department teachers.”

“Are we capable of such a thing?”

“It’s possible, just give the word and we’ll charge.”

Charge?! Are you going to war here?!

Are you going to assault the teachers or something?!

“…okay, charge.”

“” “” Roger! “” “”

Oh, maybe this isn’t so bad.

| ToC |

Chapter 2

Entering the school building from the courtyard, I went to the staff room located on the south side.

I was walking with forty-eight people spreading out behind me like a triangle attached to my back, but I couldn’t help but feel that everybody kept giving me weird looks.

I think I saw this scene in the show ‘The Great White Tower (Shiroi Kyoto/□□)’ before…

There’s no way this is actually happening, because doesn’t this make me look like some kind of Evil Boss or something?!

Since everyone was following me so seriously I tried stopping for a second to see what would happen, and they all stopped in unison as if they practiced it.

…I have to admit though, this is getting kind of fun!

The downright pleasant sound of synchronized footsteps echoed throughout the hallway.

Fortunately, the corridor is wide so there’s enough space for the other students to pass by, while I majestically blocked the area in the middle with my group.

The thing is, students that passed by us seemed awfully scared as they made eye-contact with me.

…or rather the moment they did, they turned their eyes away.

As we proceeded down the hallway, there were two people standing in the middle of it in some kind of deep discussion.

They haven’t seem to realized we were here.

“Hey you two, you’re in Kururi-san’s way.”

Somebody behind me said aloud.

The two of them turned towards us in surprise after realizing the size of my group.

They quietly mouthed “We’re so sorry.” and quickly moved away.

Wait, no, I’m the one that should be sorry!!

This is dangerous! The quality is too evil!

What are we doing?! Are we trying to conquer the school or something?!

“Umm, that should be enough you guys-”

I stopped walking and turned around.

Woah!!

Turning around, I finally noticed the tightness of all forty-eight people there, and as their leader I naturally give off this aura that makes other students cower as we approach.

“Everyone, answer this but don’t yell since you guys over do it a bit. I know it might useless to tell you guys but not matter what, absolutely do ***not*** harm other students.”

“””Yes”””

Oh, it looks like they understand.

Maybe because we just started club activities, their loyalty to me seems to be really strong.

If I show them my bad side, what will happen to me if I disappoint them?

Will I get stabbed?

Then again, what’s preventing them from stabbing me from behind right now?

It wasn’t very long, but I think I just went through a terrible experience.

Finally, we were at the staff room.

I opened the door, taking my first step inside and of course they all followed.

Surprisingly, the sheer population entering the room didn’t phase the teacher inside at all.

“Wu-sensei.”

It was my homeroom teacher.

It’d be good if he could become my club’s counselor, I mean, he’s the only teacher I know.

“I’ve created a club, so I’d appreciate some funding for it.”

“So you’ve already made one? With such a large group too… but is this really the best time to be establishing a club?”

“Bucho(Club Prez) is busy, don’t waste his time with your useless banter Wu-sensei, get to the point.”

Busy with what?!

The only thing rushing here was the beating of my heart!

With a sigh, Wu-sensei handed a form over to me.

“Here, I’ve signed this form to become your club’s counselor, so I’ll bring you your funds later but… Kururi-kun, isn’t your head getting a little big?”

A big head?! I could feel my ears burning in embarrassment. I guess it could look that way from an outsider’s perspective.

“Well try to get it in today, I mean the sooner the better right?”

“Yeah got it, but remember to take the student’s autonomy into consideration when you have your extracurricular activities, and manage your budget well.”

“Got it, and… is there a classroom we can use?”

“Of course, you’re free to use the rooms on the west side of the school, but other students may be using them as well, so make sure you have one booked first.”

…I guess this wasn’t such an impressive school after all.

I had unintentionally raised my hopes for them, but how could they just let a group as suspicious as this be created?!

“By the way, we haven’t decided what we’re going to do yet.”

“That’s fine, enough members gathering together is a good enough reason in itself. I think it would be best for you to learn the power of numbers early on, because if I’m right, in the future you’re going to be in a position that naturally brings people together.”

“…but wouldn’t it be dangerous to fully fund an organization that doesn’t even have a distinct goal in mind? Let alone one with numbers as great as this?”

Read between the lines sensei! If I disband it I’ll be stabbed, but they should let it pass if you stop it!

“Of course, although Kururi-kun, gathering together a large force like this also comes with the responsibility of maintaining it. Don’t you think I would’ve rejected it by now if I didn’t think you could handle it?”

That’s…

…true, in this world there’s no such thing as sweet talk. I might only be 15 year’s old, but even I know that.

“Wu-sensei, can you give me more advice if I ever need it again?”

“Anytime, though I doubt you’ll need it, I have high hopes for you Kururi-kun.”

“Yeah, well then let’s go everyone.”

Everyone left the room on my cue.

Well, I guess if we got this far I might as well take advantage of it.

“Bucho, why don’t we return to the courtyard first to think of the direction we’ll take in the future? Then we can find a

clubroom.”

I nodded my head to Heart’s proposal, and we returned to the courtyard.

“Everyone, from now on I’ll be talking about what direction I plan to take this club, so I want you all to listen!”

Everyone nodded in response.

I started making my proposition.

“I still haven’t decided what to do yet, but I have decided our motive! We will be the one’s with the hearts of Gentle Lions!”

They all tilted their heads as if to say ‘What does that mean?’.

“On the surface, those that have entered here have been considered superior in literary and military arts. We’ve studied hard and know a lot, but even the A-class has neglected this! We need to ride off of this momentum and change their assessment of us!”

To fire them up I showed them my serious face, flashing a smile to fuel their aspirations.

“We’re no good as we are now. In the future, we’re supposed to be the ones to stand over others with our abilities, and we will get to that point if we all put in some effort. However, the most important thing is to be able to see things from the perspective of the underdog. That’s the caliber that we

need! For those who stand above others, with the consideration of those below them, that is our goal! The heart of a Gentle Lion!”

“” “Oh” ”” voices of approval were raised.

My first speech seems to have succeeded.

I felt a bit uneasy with how they put me on a pedestal like that, but it doesn’t feel bad being able to see everyone’s faces gathered together.

“Now let’s talk about where we want this group to go, if anyone has an idea do it with a show of hands.”

….

No one raised their hands.

I don’t want to have to start picking people!

“Umm, does it really matter if we have a goal or not?”

The one who raised his hand was a guy with silky hair and glasses.

“You’re… Thomas-kun right? If I remember correctly you scored fairly high on the achievement test.”

“Yeah, it is an honour to know that you know me.”

There were students from the A-class here and there, but even among them Thomas was a Moi-level person in his preformance.

I just realized it, but don’t I have a lot of talented people here?

“Since we’re just starting, do you plan to rent a clubroom?”

“That was my intention.”

I haven’t made any promises yet though, everything is still up for discussion.

It’d be nice to have a place to meet if this all works out.

“The clubrooms on the west side of the school can only fit about 60 people at most, but if we think about our future growth here, wouldn’t it be better just to build a castle?”

A castle?!

Build a castle at school?!

I’m seriously contemplating on whether or not we’re going to overrun the school here!

“Isn’t that going a little too far? Forget about the construction costs, where would we find the land to build it?”

“Don’t worry about it, in the school grounds surrounded by a fence there’s a vast open area in the northwest. Just north of the freshman dorms. We’ve already gotten the approval of the teachers, as for the construction costs… one of my territory’s livelihoods is construction, so we’d be able to secure materials and personal for cheap. In total it would take about… half our budget?”

“…is that so?”

Thomas may look like an academic at first glance, but just what is he thinking?

It’s a big dream, but I guess that’s what you get when the world you live in is small…

“Alright!! Now we know what we’re doing!! Thomas-kun, can you take the leadership role for the construction?” Heart agreed.

…Wait, we’re actually going through with this?!

“Yeah! Let’s build a castle just for us!” Thomas yelled excitedly.

“We’ll create a castle completely independant from the school!” Heart excitedly added on.

Unsurprisingly, she seemed to have big ambitions.

By the way, isn’t this already at a level of an embassy?! Heart!!

“From the school we should be able to rent some equipment for measurements. Do you think it would be fine if I took some people to help me out?”

“Of course it will be, just do what you need to Thomas-kun.”

Thomas happily collected some volunteers and rushed into the school building.

While we moved to the location where we were going to build the castle.

Just as Thomas-kun said, it sure was a vast vacant plot of land.

Even after we complete the castle there would still be space to spare.

It took a while, but Thomas and his group eventually came.

In their hands were various kinds of surveying equipment.

To understand the future of this project, I started a conversation with Thomas-kun.

“The professional work can be left to my territory’s craftsmen. Since we just issued the request to them today, it’ll take them two or three days to prepare and get here. Until they arrive though, we’ll try to do what we can with the

staff on hand, such getting the land ready for the basic materials. Will that be okay?”

“That’s amazing Thomas-kun, I have no objections do whatever you think is best. So, what should we start with?”

“First we should survey the area, it’s a basic rule of thumb when looking at a construction area, but it shouldn’t take too long. Then we can start checking the foundation of the soil and such.”

“It feels great to know that I have such an excellent staff. Okay! Why don’t you hand me a shovel so I can help?”

“No, umm… why don’t you sit down and take a break Bucho?”

“I want to be the kind of leader who works hard for his reward, I can’t just sit while you guys work, it’d go against my ideals.”

“Bucho!” Thomas-kun seemed to be moved.

Yup, I worded that good, but really I just hate boredom.

“Now Thomas-kun, give out your instructions!”

“Yes!”

Apparently the castle is only to be three-stories high, so it’s necessary to get the underlying ground ready.

First, we need to dig a hole.

I’ve dug out the hot springs before this, so this is the best work for me!

“That’s amazing Bucho, you’re digging at an amazing pace!” I was complimented by a club member whose name I didn’t know.

“Well I’m accustomed to digging, that’s all there is to it.”

“You really are amazing though Bucho. From the moment the shovel goes into the ground to when the dirt comes flying out, there aren’t any unnecessary movements at all!” I was complimented by a female club member whose name I also didn’t know.

“Well, that’s just because I’m more experienced at this.”

“A moat could be created in an instant at this pace Bucho, I don’t even have to work hard and…” I was complimented again by a child that I didn’t know.

“Well I have confidence in my speed.”

“I wonder, if I copy his movements, will I be able to master digging easily?”

I have other good points too!!

Don’t just praise me for my digging skills!!

I worked hard to change myself ever since I turned into Kururi-kun! Isn’t there anything else good about me?!

“Kururi Helan, here are the funds that you requested.”

It was the voice of Wu-sensei, who had suddenly appeared while interrupting my work.

For some reason he had a pompous bag hanging off of his back.

“…Is the money inside of that bag?”

“Yup, correct. The documents dealing with the summary of its contents are in there too, after you verify it tell me if it’s correct or not, and with that I bid you farewell.”

With that the funds were dropped onto the ground giving off an amazing sense of weight.

A bit curious, I opened and peered into the layered bag.

?!

Inside was a ridiculous amount of gold coins.

It was an amount I couldn’t possibly count by hand.

This is bad, my left hand couldn’t stop trembling. I almost want to take some photo’s for insurance.

I took a look behind me.

Everyone is seriously working off of Thomas-kun’s instructions.

That means… I’m the only one who knows the contents of this bag…

Should I take it?

…No!! I don’t want to be stabbed from behind!!

I almost want to say sorry to everyone who was working seriously right now.

Slowly, I carried the bag over in my trembling left hand.

“Everyone, I’ve received the funds, the biggest obstacle to the castle construction has been cleared.”

“Yeah!” “We did it!” “GOOD GOING!!!”

When I saw the happy faces of everyone, I was glad I didn’t take it.

“Thomas-kun, give me the hardest job we have.”

“Oh you don’t need to do that Bucho.”

“I do need it. My mind is weak, I’m a bad person, command me!!”

“Command?!”

“Yeah, give me instructions.”

“Ah, umm… yeah, over there.”

I received new tools from Thomas-kun and headed to the area he pointed to.

There, looking at the sight of the group working for me. I couldn’t help but feel the pressure of what I had to take care of now.

With great power comes great responsibility.

I also have to grow.

That’s what I thought as I pushed my shovel into the dirt for the nth time.

TN: The great white tower is a Japanese drama series created in 2003, never watched it but apparently they’re famous for this scene here:

| ToC |

Chapter 3

“I’m so tired…”

The leftover fatigue from yesterday’s work felt like it was pulsing through my body.

I must’ve dug too many holes back then…

Today’s our first full-fledged day of classes.

Starting from today, we’re allowed to freely choose from the list of optional electives to try out.

I was just barely able to drag my lead-like body to first period, Herbalism.

I chose this elective without hesitation because it’s currently the one I’m the most interested in.

In the end, there were about 30 students in total gathered together for the class.

There sure are a lot of girls though…

Even the instructor is female.

“Thanks for coming everyone. My name is Amari and I’ll be your instructor for Herbalism.”

With a voice that had a nice chime to it, the instructor introduced herself as Amari. She seems to be in her thirties, while her round-frame glasses stand prominent on her warm face.

“Herbalism has many academic as well as practical aspects to it. What you learn here today can be used to help many more people in your days to come.”

That right there is one of the reasons why I chose this class.

I’m not interested in theories and the like.

What I want is knowledge that I can use in the near future for profit.

A good herb merchant will be able to create goods that sell for a higher price than what the herbs originally costed, and the knowledge on how to create those goods can be easily learned in this class.

“Herbs are generally common enough that anyone can experiment with them for a cheap price, but personally my goal is to develop a large variety that anyone can grow for free. For those interested there’s an extra seminar on this happening later on, it’s even self-sponsored.”

Amari-sensei gave a gentle smile.

Yup, she definitely has the heart of a nice person, unlike some other people I know…

“That said, please do, the herbal tour will be free because it’s your first time in class, and it’ll make me happy to see all of you in a formal lesson.”

Sensei smiled again. Ahh~ I’m being healed~

“Oh and even if you’re curious, make sure you don’t eat any of them. There are some dangerous ones here too.”

* * *

We followed Sensei’s instructions as we toured the herbs.

By the way, the herbalism classroom is located on the north side of the school on the first floor.

Inside are the herbs that are more suited for indoor cultivation methods, while all the others are cultivated outside.

Oh, and apparently this is the only classroom that directly has an exit to the school grounds.

Different kinds of herbs hung off of the walls and ceiling, while an abundant amount was being grown outside as well.

They fully utilized the land they were given, growing an amount I couldn’t possibly see in only an hour.

In the distance I could see something that looked like a vinyl house.

I was getting a little excited thinking about all the herbs I could grow here.

“Excuse me, but you’re… Kururi Helan right?”

Calling out to the me who was busily looking at herbs was a boy whose face was mostly covered by his hood.

He was short, and his complexion was pale.

….and ugh, he reeks!!

The intense odour of herbs seemed to emanate off him.

Trying my best not to breath through my nose, I was somehow able to choke out a “Yeah, that’s me.”

“The name’s Toto Gapp, and I’ve been interested in you for a while.”

“I-is that so?”

This is bad, our conversation isn’t even registering in my head.

Ugh, I can’t block the smell!

“Oh sorry, you’re acting like that because of the smell right? Just give me a minute to take off my jacket.”

As he said so, Toto started to remove his hood, moving to place it in the corner of the classroom.

While he was coming back, I tentatively tried breathing through my nose.

There’s no smell!

Su. (sfx: sniff)

No smell at all!

“I usually wear that to ward off people, because I usually go to places where some unsightly people can be found.”

Ward off people?! This is the first time I’ve heard of this.

“So you needed me for something?”

“Yeah, I was rather surprised that you were interested in herbs. If you want, do you want to take a look at the varieties that I’m developing at the moment?”

“Developing? Wait… You’re saying that you’ve cultivated new herb species?!”

“That’s right, that’s because I’m a genius in this field. Come on, check this out.”

He guided me to an area that had a mass of greenhouses lined up.

Eventually he passed into one and there I saw them.

There were herbs suspended off of the ceiling, herbs planted closely together, palm-sized ones, and some that were almost as big as I was!

All of them were unusual herbs that I haven’t seen before.

“Amazing right? I’m the one that created them all.”

“All of them?!”

“Yeah, but the unique ones at the vinyl house belong to Amari-sensei.”

“That’s still amazing though.”

I tried giving the small plastic building a small look around.

All of them were herbs that I had never seen before, and there were even some whose beauty rivaled that of flowers.

I couldn’t help but touching those ones a little bit.

Their leaves were smooth.

“It’s okay to touch, but don’t smell them. After you go to bed tomorrow its effect would kick in, and I’m far from finished developing them. I’m still conducting clinical experiments using storage flies.”

Are they okay with you doing clinical experiments here at school?!

Who gave you permission?! Is this really okay?!

…moving on to the next herb, I tried rubbing its leaves in my hand.

“Oh, that one’s also okay to touch, but don’t eat. One leaf and you’ll end up spitting out all your internal organs. By the way, I’ve already finished my clinical experiments with that one.”

I immediately backed off.

Again, why?!!

“It wasn’t safe with the flies?”

“Nope, the fly practically left for heaven with just its smell alone. It took an entire day before it broke free of its delusional world.”

This thing’s bad!!

Soon I was passed another herb by Toto.

I can’t help but feel my sense of values is a little different than his.

“This one’s different, this one’s more useful for humanity, for example… you know there’s herbs for curing colds and other diseases right?”

“Of course.”

Telling me to wait, he left for the back of the greenhouse before returning with some tools.

…and then he suddenly started digging at the ground.

“Here, I’ll give you a hand.”

“No, I’m good.”

After a bit, showed me his hands covered in soil.

Inside was some kind of root that seems to have grown distortedly.

“If you eat this, you’ll feel an overflowing force come out of your whole body. It’ll be extremely useful for patients that require temporary strength in surgery and other operations.”

“Isn’t that amazing? Do you have any more of these?”

“Unfortunately no, there isn’t much of it. I’ve tried to develop a herb that gives the same effects while being able to grow quickly, but it ended in failure. In truth, when you ate it… well let’s just say that it was unfinished.”

…I wonder why he’s doing all this?

I’m getting a little curious.

“I’ve also got some special varieties of grass, that grow quickly and sell for a fairly decent price.”

“Wow.”

…I want, gimme.

“…and that’s enough of my long introduction, so now let’s talk about the main reason why I approached you.”

“Okay, shoot.”

“To put it in words, it’s because I’m interested in your club Kururi. You have about fifty people right? I just want you to get a few people to test some of my herbs, and of course I’d be willing to pay for your services.”

So it was that kind of thing.

“Rejected. No discussion. Sorry, but it’s too dangerous. Why can’t you just continue your experiments like you have until now?”

“I’m only one person, I can’t do everything myself, and it also leaves insufficient data.”

“Even so I can’t lend out any of my members. That would be too irresponsible of me as their leader.”

“Che, I thought you would understand…”

Toto was facing down, somewhat depressed.

He had a really regretful face, but I can’t be sorry now.

“Why are you so desperate to develop your herbs?”

“…” Toto silently continued to stare at his feet.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to say, well then if you’ll excus-”

“…its because of gold. I’m a still a noble even if it’s for a small border territory, but because I’m the fourth son, it’s necessary for me to find a means for supporting myself. I thought that because you were studying to become a blacksmith you would be able to understand… guess I was wrong.”

…I do understand! I just can’t tell you the actual reason why! I’ve been hitting hot iron all this time so that I won’t embarrass myself in the future!

We’re actually comrades!

“For that kind of thing…”

“Go ahead, laugh. You spoiled children of major nobles are all the same.”

Toto’s depressed mood seems to have hit its climax.

“Hey, what’s your expected profit margin?”

“…what?”

“How much do you earn with your herbs?”

“…I don’t know, I’ve never sold them. The only thing I’ve sold would be that grass I showed you before.”

“Well, as long as it doesn’t mess around with the human mind, I think it’ll be okay.”

“What about herbs that open all the pores in the body at once?”

What the hell is that?!

I had involuntarily retorted in my head.

“That’s… a little extreme.”

“I guess, but that’s just how some of them work.”

“For now, I’ll make a list of your medicinal herbs that I think will sell well, I’ll become your sponsor.”

“…what? Why?!”

“Well, that’s something I should probably tell you another day.”

“Understood, when do you think I should start selling? I’m fine with even starting tomorrow.”

“It’s probably best not to sell these at school, you aren’t prepared for it, and you don’t have the permissions to either. Instead, three months from now during summer vacation, come over to the Helan territory, and I’ll get you all the permits and stuff that you’ll need as a merchant. So for now just continue to develop your herbs that you’ll require then,

and I’ll give you a hand after school when I’m free. You won’t be disappointed, I work hard.”

“-!! Thank you!! Just leave the development to me Kururi!”

Despite his bad complexion, I think this was the best smile he gave all day.

“Do you know about my territory’s hot springs?”

“Of course, I bet everyone here knows about them.”

“Lots of people, especially wives go there seeking to revitalise their skin, what do you think? Can you smell the gold?”

“Yeah, it’s a great stink!”

“What we need developed now are herbs that are good for the skin! That’s what we need now, Toto-kun!!”

“Beauty herbs, herbs that make people more beautiful…”

“Yup, those are the herbs that will bring in the gold, even better, one that has no side effects when used.”

“No side effects? That’s kind of unreasonable.”

“Unreasonable? Yes, but that’s nothing compared to the demands of a wife!”

“…true.”

Toto was chewing his nails as he thought. He seems to already be thinking of a way to cultivate them.

“I’ll see what I can do Kururi. If you have any more ideas make sure to tell me about them.”

“If I think of any, but for now I’ll visit you several times a week to help with the process. Our goal right now is to develop it before summer vacation starts three months from now, a beauty herb!”

“Right!”

…and that, coupled with his bad complexion was his best leering face he made all day.

I wonder why when people think of gold, they always start to leer for some reason…

Guess I’ll never know.

| ToC |

Chapter 4

Recently I’ve noticed that my school life has been progressing in a terribly violent flow, so seeking refuge, I decided now would be a good time to take a look at the school fountain.

On the south side of the school, there’s a huge fountain right in between it and the main gate. I’ve seen it from afar several times now, but it sure does give off a different impression when you look at it close up.

The water is blown up high, causing the temperature around it to feel cooler than it should be.

“Uhyo~”

I chased the apex of the spray with my eyes, and then shook my head a little bit.

“Oh?”

Glancing downwards with the fall of the spray was what appeared to be a girl sitting on the other side of the fountain.

…and she was crying.

Bushu (sfx: spurt) The fountain spurred back to life, hiding her appearance.

I was certain, that was the girl who was one of Eliza’s original ‘Four Heavenly Kings’, I think her name was ‘Mary’ or something like that.

She was also the girl who always called me ‘Servant’, so I don’t have a very good impression of her either…

The fountain’s spray fell back down, and her figure could be seen again.

Yup, she’s still crying.

I think I just saw something that I shouldn’t have seen…

The fountain rose again, and her figure was hidden.

I think it would be better if I just leave right now.

Yeah, that would be for the best.

It shouldn’t be worth mentioning that getting involved with a crying girl, let alone one who hates me, would definitely bring trouble.

Only a problematic story would await me if I intruded.

The fountain spray fell back down, once again revealing her.

““Ah.””

We made eye-contact.

After staring at each other wordlessly for while, the fountain spray came back up, blocking our lines of sight yet again.

I've been seen, there's no way out now. I can no longer afford running away in silence in this situation.

Building up my courage, I walked over to the area Mary was sitting at along the fountain.

While putting out my best smile, I called out "Hey". Though it's already impossible to pretend to be a naive boy that doesn't know anything.

"…*gusu*" (sfx: crying)

She sniffed her nose, but didn't reply.

Either that, or sniffing her nose *was* her reply.

Her eyes had become red from her tears, so it looks like she's been crying quite a decent amount.

While saying, "Is there something wrong?", I tried sitting down beside her as naturally as I could.

"…*gusu*, don't sit next to me."

I was shot down instantly?!

“Did something happen with Eliza?”

Although her body language clearly said so, it was still a guess.

“It doesn’t concern you.”

I know that but I’m already involved!

I could just walk away now you know?! But I didn’t you know?!

“Don’t say that, at the very least I’m not completely unrelated to Eliza. If you need me to, I can say something to her.”

“What do you know about Eliza-sama?! Don’t get involved!”

Rubbing her swollen eyes, she threw some violent words at me.

Eliza in a nutshell, is a ‘tough’ woman character. I know that very well, so there’s no way I wouldn’t have noticed how close she is with her entourage.

This is also something necessary to maintain the ‘balance’ of the world!

“The same Eliza that always keeps people at arm’s length and has a scary face when she closes her eyes, though in

truth she’s just thinking about what kind of dinner she’s going to have later?”

“She’s not that kind of person!”

“I also know that her favorite food is chiffon cake, though buttered potatoes come a close second for her.”

“Th-that can’t be… I would’ve noticed something like that by now…”

“More or less.”

“I-I get it already okay?! You know more about Eliza-sama than me okay?!

“I’m not looking down on you or anything, I only said what I knew, nothing more, nothing less.”

Mary had a somewhat depressed face.

She must’ve not liked how much I knew about Eliza that she didn’t.

“Even if Eliza acts like that, she’s still human, it’s not like she’s giving you special treatment or anything, so there’s no need to worry about it so much.”

“How can you say that when you obviously like Eliza-sama that much?”

“I’ll stay quiet when I need to, but you know, I can be assertive when I want to be. There’s plenty of time to get closer to her.”

I flashed another smile.

“I… I’ve glared at you, and cursed at you before, so why? Why are you being so kind to me?”

“No reason really, just because I can I guess.”

I’m only a ‘servant’ after all.

“You’re doing this because you like me?”

“You’re wrong!! How did you think of something like that?!”

Her head must be full of flowers or something… ah, she finally smiled a bit. Then she casted her eyes back to the ground.

“You see, I was taken off of Eliza-sama’s entourage…” she muttered.

Ahh, so that’s why I didn’t see her with the other ‘Four Heavenly Kings’ previously.

“May I ask why?”

“Its because I wasn’t deemed worthy enough to serve someone like Eliza-sama.”

“What do you mean?”

“…I was the only one allocated to the E-class during the placement exams. The other three safely made it to the A-

class and have continued to be part of her group, while my position was replaced with another A-class student.”

…E-class.

How should I react in this situation?

“Its tough being in E-class huh?”

“That’s my line! Don’t insult me! What does it matter to you anyway?! I’m just an underachieving E-class girl in the end, right?!”

“Wait, don’t get angry, you’re raising your voice! Calm down! What do you think will happen if Eliza catches wind of this?”

“There would be no problem at all! It was a mistake to allow you to talk to me in the first place!”

With her being so loud, we were getting a few side glances here and there.

It probably wouldn’t be best if I got angry here.

If she starts crying again, people would most likely think it was my fault.

Not even I’m willing to let things spiral in that direction.

The atmosphere between us had become awkward, leaving only the sound of the fountain to answer our thoughts.

If only it could give me the answers on what to say…

“Hey, was it fun? Being one of Eliza’s close aides, I mean.”

“…fun or not fun, such things didn’t matter at the time.”

“That’s not true. Why would you want to be together with a person if you’re not having fun?”

“Everyone just wanted to be with her, isn’t that enough? I can’t understand why you’re being so pushy about this.”

“It’s important though, if you truly weren’t having fun while you were with Eliza, then why are you so sad?”

She went quiet for a while before replying.

“…I guess it was a little fun. I mean, I was… happy being together with Eliza-sama, it was my reason for living, it was a part of my very being.”

“Isn’t the answer easy then? All you have to do is find a new purpose in life.”

“Don’t say such a thing!”

She turned her face towards me and glared, in her eyes I could see something furious.

Getting up softly, I reached my hand to her.

“Well, I need to get going to my club. We still haven’t decided what we’re going to do, but we’re already building something for it. It’s surprisingly fun, so why don’t you come with me?”

“I won’t go! I have no interest in such a thing!”

“Don’t say that, just come one time and you’ll see. We have female club members too, and its really worthwhile working together with everyone on the same thing.”

“…I won’t go.”

“Is that so… well, that’s too bad.” I pulled my hand back.

To the her that had hung her head again, I began to slowly walk away, but I didn’t leave without throwing these words at her first:

“The construction is happening just north of the freshman dorms, you can come at anytime that you want.”

“…I won’t go.”

“I’ll be waiting.”

“…”

Bosoboso (sfx: Whisper) I could hear a faint whispering sound coming from my back.

I didn’t quite understand it, but there was one thing I’m sure I heard.

‘I will definitely, *definitely* not go!!’

| ToC |

Chapter 5

Okay, now all I’ve got to do is choose my electives.

After school, I was thinking about such things while I worked on building the clubroom.

First I chose Herbalism, so next would be…

Raising a cute pig in Animal Husbandry would be nice. Eating it later might hurt, but it’s one of the leading candidates.

I want to eat better and better meats.

Martial arts is definitely a no.

It’s a very disheartening class.

When I saw the figure of a girl with a physique larger than my own I couldn’t help but freeze up.

I almost hurled, and decided that class wouldn’t be for me. What was that… that girl that couldn’t have been a girl.

Tomorrow maybe I’ll try out the Medical Science, though Law sounds interesting as well.

“Bucho.”

“Hmm?”

“You’ll get hurt if you work while thinking absentmindedly.”

“Ah that’s right, thanks.”

I should probably take my club member’s advice and concentrate on my work.

Even so, who was that guy?

Soon I should take to learning the club roster by heart. When I call out to them, it’d be really disheartening if I was only able to refer to them by ‘That person over there’.

So far the clubroom’s construction seems to be going really well.

Everyone worked with high motivation, and the artisans that came from Thomas-san’s territory were very masterful in their trade.

Speaking of people who’ve recently came… it took a while, but she’s here. Mary’s been coming over to spectate our progress as of late.

In less than two days, she had already blended into the group as if she were an original member.

Since she has a good enough appearance to be called a beauty, she’s also become a good source of motivation for our male members.

I mean, all of us want to show off our good side when a pretty girl is around, right?

Even so, I think it was a good idea to take her in.

She’s happy, and we’re happy, that’s what’s important.

As I was thinking about such trivial things, in my line of sight I could see one of my club members running towards me at a desperate pace.

I don’t know his name, but I do know his face. There’s no doubt he’s a member.

“Bucho!!”

I had a bad feeling, from his expression I could tell this wasn’t going to be a pleasant conversation.

“Take a deep breath, and explain it to me calmly. What happened?”

I mean, I’m still preparing my own heart.

Since I asked, please be a trivial story!

“Fu~, can I have a moment?” (sfx: Breath out)

“Take another deep breath in.”

“Yes.”

He dutifully did another great job of breathing in and out.

“Fu~ *That* Eliza Deauville is approaching here with a fierce expression right as we speak! Her entourage of four have weird expressions plastered on as well!”

Hey, you’re joking right? You’re wrong right? Please tell me you’re wrong!

Who was it that summoned the Angry Goddess?!!

The members who had heard the story stopped their work with pale faces.

With the wolves coming, everyone started to lump together in a herd.

Now who will be our sacrifice.

…and of course, it couldn’t be anyone else but me.

While taking quick strides in my direction, Eliza was glaring holes through me.

Indeed, right now I could feel an unusual amount of hot air in what was usually quite a cold atmosphere.

Even so, she sure is beautiful… No! How can I think about such things, especially right now?

Please, do a U-turn! Turn around! Do not approach! Even if I knew it useless I tried praying a little… and of course, it was in vain.

I wonder if this is how sheep feels when they know they’re about to be slaughtered and eaten raw.

I’m not going to run away, but if anyone else does I won’t blame them.

Even so, the aura released by Eliza sure is scary.

Wow, we’re a pathetic herd.

They can’t learn that their ‘Bucho’ is feeling anxious at heart.

I could feel their lines of sight falling on me.

Huh, I wonder what Eliza’s so angry about.

‘Cause whoever’s responsible is getting a huge scolding later!

“Greetings, Kururi-sama.”

Immediately after they arrived, while stopping the girl in her entourage that was about to say something, Eliza spoke herself.

The very same Eliza who was standing right in front of me.

…she’s beautiful, but wow, my stomach is killing me.

I definitely wouldn’t be able to eat anything at this moment.

“Hey Eliza, what’s with the scary face? Even worse, what’s with that tone that’s as if you’re issuing a challenge? My stomach won’t be able to handle this pressure you know?”

“Kururi-sama, please stop it with the boring jokes already.”

Kiritsu! (sfx: *Sharp* glare) I could almost hear the blade being drawn from her stare. Her sharp eyes felt like they were digging into my own.

“Uwah, whatever you’re angry about I’m sorry, will you forgive us?” I decided it’d be best if I just apologised like normal.

“I’m here for Mary-san.”

“Mary?”

Oh… but wasn’t she fired from the original Four Heavenly Kings?

“Do you need something from her?”

“Nothing big, she’s already out of my entourage. Though recently, she’s been extremely rude to me, becoming another’s belonging without even telling me about it? How dare she.”

“Oh, really?”

The person who summoned the Angry Goddess was me!!

I’m so sorry!! Please don’t chastise me!!

“Mary-san.”

The voice itself was alluringly gentle, but it had an inexplicable chill to it.

“…yes.”

In a tone that was all but fleeting, Mary answered while she rushed over to Eliza.

“Well, what do you have to say for yourself?”

“I…”

Mary looked like she was about to cry.

Heck, *I* felt like I was about to cry. Eliza was that scary.

“Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Kururi-san!” “Bucho!”

Some of the club members called out to me.

I can’t afford to let a wolf take a young female sheep away from the herd.

I understand that feeling. I knew it would be painful, but I didn’t think that Eliza would be this intimidating.

My ancestors have probably hunted down dozens of wolves before. This should be easy.

…Fu.

Clenching my right fist tightly, I opened my mouth.

“Eliza wait, what are you going to do to Mary?”

Redirecting her gaze to my face, I could feel the words “There’s no need for me to tell you.” stab me from Eliza’s eyes.

Even so, I wonder what came over me all of a sudden, ‘cause before I knew it, I was standing in front of her, meeting her glare head-on.

Ugh, I really want to turn away right now, you know?

“I’m going to punish her of course. Isn’t natural to give some discipline to dogs that bite the hands of the owners that feed them? It’s the same thing with subordinates, don’t you understand?”

“No, I mean specifically, what are you going to do to her as punishment?”

“Why does it matter to you? You’re completely unrelated to this problem.”

“That’s not true, Mary is one of the members in my club. It would trouble me if you just took her without permission.”

“I wonder? Are you sure you’re not misunderstanding something Kururi-sama?”

Dang, Eliza sure has sharp eyes today. I almost went to grab my stomach, doing my best to fight the pain.

“Well, why don’t we ask Mary-san then?”

“Eh?!” Mary looked like she couldn’t hold back her tears any longer.

“Now Mary-san tell me, who do you belong to? Me? Or Kururi-sama? What is your answer Mary-san?”

There was a strong meaning laced into that gentle voice.

Mary was already far beyond her limit, her tears streaming down to her feet non-stop.

“*Hick* Y-yeah… the one I serve is Eliza-sama o-of course.”

“You see, Mary-san said it herself. Do you have any objections Kururi-sama?”

Without waiting for my reply, she and her entourage began walking back down the path she came, with Mary in tow.

The storm had disappeared, for the sacrifice of one young sheep.

“Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Kururi-san!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Kururi-dono!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Fucho! (Head Nurse!)” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!” “Bucho!”

The club members that seemed to be in a daze suddenly snapped back to reality.

I looked at everyone’s faces.

They were hot, burning faces that seemed to say “This is wrong!”.

…I know.

Even I… Even I feel the same way.

You caught me.

…and hey, who called me ‘Fucho’?!

“Wait, Eliza!”

I screamed out in a loud voice to make sure she could hear it, there’s no way I could just let her leave in silence like this.

Eliza stopped.

Her annoyance could be detected from her back alone.

Eliza and her entourage froze in place, while Mary dashed back, taking refuge behind me.

I don’t think I need to say this again but, this is scary as hell!

We’re just a bunch of sheep trapped in a corner.

“Eliza, you need to understand human beings more, you need to know a little more of their pain. You can’t just do this to people!”

“What? You still don’t know why I’m doing this? I’ll tell you one last time, this is a problem that only involves me and that girl behind you. So Kururi Helan, why don’t you just shut up already and hand her over?”

“I will not, Mary is a member of my club. She’s staying here.”

“…shut up.”

“No, I’m also saying this for you, because I might have to live a humble life with you in the future, Eliza. I’m creating this opportunity for you to learn about caring for others.”

“You know, from the very moment we met I thought you were a funny person, but that ends now. I was a fool to think I could have a serious talk with you.”

Gunununu! (sfx: gnashing teeth)

I’m doing this for you, you know?!

“Huh? Well no, I refuse. For the time being, Mary is staying with us.”

“Bullshit.”

Finally, I snapped.

Eliza is one of the most beautiful girls I’ve ever seen, born into a powerful, wealthy noble house, and is blessed with a versatile amount of talent. The thing is, she’s so blessed to the point where she can no longer understand the feelings of those weaker than her.

That’s why she bullies Iris.

For that sort of reason, there’s no way I can allow it to continue.

If it’s the me of now, I can do it.

At my very best, right now I can carry out my revenge.

Special Move! Dekopin(Forehead Flick) of Friendship!

The Dekopin of Friendship, a special move unlike the violent Dekopin, which uses the full force of a middle finger hooked

to the thumb, that only does a light flick using the nails at the tip of the finger!

Ei!

My attack was a direct hit to Eliza’s forehead.

“Don’t tease people too much, that’s not the kind of person you are.”

…

…??

…I thought that she would immediately retaliate in angry waves, but Eliza hadn’t issued a single word as she stared downwards.

“…that hurt.”

With a faint voice, Eliza’s eyes which were usually so sharp were filled with tears.

Eh?! She’s whimpering?!

…she’s so cute.

Wait no, no! That’s wrong! I’m not supposed to be thinking of such things right now!

Eliza covered her forehead with both her hands and let out a small “Au…”.

“Au?”

What the heck is this?! It’s so cute!!

No, that’s not it! That’s not it!!!

What am I doing?! This is ridiculous!!

“Not even my father ever hit me…”

“What?”

“You hit me first! I’m going to tell my father to tell off your father!! This is completely unacceptable!”

While in tears, Eliza ran off while holding her forehead.

Everyone behind me was relieved.

Still though, that was so cute.

“We’ll remember this!!”

Somebody from her entourage shouted out.

Uwah, that’s the cliché line of losers, does this mean it’s our win?

Wait, we won?

“” “” “” “Bucho!!” “” “” “

The club members crowded around me at once.

You guys are hot! Give me some space!

I was finally caught, and somebody put me on their shoulders.

I was then thrown into the air about ten times before I was let down. What awaited me with teary eyes there, was Mary.

“Hey, welcome back.”

“Yes, I’m back.”

Mary was just crying a little while ago, but she started to cry again.

Unlike last time though, these were tears of happiness.

The club members were delighted.

I made the right choice.

Hmm… I wonder if I’m actually good at this kind of stuff? Yet here I am, the only anxious person in a crowd of people celebrating.

I have a feeling I might have just jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Thinking of what kind of revenge Eliza has in store for me sent shivers down my spine.

| ToC |

Chapter 6

Today I’m going to the Medical Science elective during my first period.

Really, there is only so much a single person can learn at a time.

That’s what I was thinking about when I was caught by a guy with a refreshing smile on his face.

“Hey Kururi-kun, I heard the rumors. Is it true? Did you really challenge Eliza?”

“Be quiet, we’re in the middle of class.”

I pretended that I didn’t hear Rail’s comment while I was looking at the class tools.

One set of medical equipment is used by two people each.

At one of the eight square tables in the classroom, we listened to the lecture of the current instructor in our four groups.

“If you really had offended Eliza, that’s a scary thought. I could never resolve myself to do that, heck, not even Prince Arc would try offending her.”

“Please be quiet, I won’t be able to listen to the instructor’s lesson.”

I can barely focus on the lesson as it is, and I **definitely** don’t want to think about Eliza any more. My stomach can’t take it.

Whether or not my scolding worked, I could no longer hear Rail’s voice anymore.

Did he give up?

Curious, I turned to Rail’s direction…

Eh?!

He was just silently standing there, smiling at me. Hahaha… That’s weird, I don’t remember anything funny happening for him to smile like that.

I was right! This guy is just too creepy!

After the instructor’s lecture ended, he passed around some guinea pig corpses that are used for experiments to each group.

It looks like we’re dismantling them today.

This might be good in its own way, I might be able to use it as reference for later on, and there’s even a medical book that describes the procedure, more or less.

Right as the experiment was about to begin, Rail switched places with my partner as if it was the most natural thing in the world to do.

“The instructor’s lecture is over, we can have a conversation like this now, right?”

“May I ask what you want to talk about? Is it about Eliza?”

“Unfortunately, you are correct, so? What really happened between the two of you? I’m interested on your take of the events that transpired.”

“Hey, if you’re going to keep doing this, I’d prefer to work alone. I need to concentrate on my hands.”

“Well, that’s no good right? Hey, I’m a bit anxious since this is the first time I’ve dissected anything, so why don’t we do this together?”

He flashed a wink my way.

This is my first time doing something like this too.

My nerves are on edge as well. Everyone else looked like they were working through it just fine, though the instructor gave out pointers here and there when he thought they were having trouble.

“Okay, for now let’s just continue with the procedures.”

“Right, the book says we need to start by opening up the stomach. Straight to the point, huh?”

We slowly opened its stomach with our medical knives.

“Woah!”

A bit of squirted out and splashed onto Rail’s face. I felt a little sick looking at it, you see I don’t have much resistance to these things. It was like this during that time with the sheep too.

Even so, the mechanism of the internal organs is quite worrisome, there’s a lot of tension that comes with doing this, huh?

“This is the heart… right?” I tried poking its little heart with my finger.

“…I give up, that’s amazing, to actually have enough courage to just touch it like that. You truly are the man who had angered Eliza.”

Stop leading the conversation over to Eliza!

Taking out one of the organs in revenge, I mushed it onto Rail’s face without hesitation.

“Uwaa, how terrible.”

Even though he was wiping mucus off of his face, his smile still hadn’t disappeared. Maybe he’s an ‘M’?

“Hey Kururi-kun, may I ask why you chose to come to Medical Science? Are you going to become a doctor in your territory?”

“…its because of gold.”

“Money? Haha, my image of you just changed. Though I’m still interested, in what happened between you and Eliza that is.”

In response, I mushed another organ into his face.

He yelled “Wabbu~” while he bent his head back to get away.

“I was thinking about becoming a doctor in the future, and hey, Kururi-kun, even though our purposes are different, we’re still going to be together for the rest of class. Wouldn’t it be better to have a conversation instead of staying in awkward silence? I want to talk with you.”

Well I don’t want to talk with you. Getting involved with you will only bring trouble.

“The other students never do. They always avoid me in class and never let me in on their conversations you know?”

“Its because you’re always with Prince Arc, and isn’t it selfish of you to decide that I’m the only one that can get along with you?”

You’re doing this too one-sidedly!

First Prince, isn’t it selfish of you to just dump him on me like this, where are you?!

“The reason why I think that way is, well…” he looked my way and smiled. “a secret.”

“Come to think of it, that selfish prince isn’t here with you today… that’s interesting.”

“So selfish, calling others selfish when they aren’t even here, why don’t you say it to their face instead?”

“Whatever, it doesn’t matter with me, my opinion’s not going to change.”

As if I could say that!! I unintentionally retorted in my head.

“Hey Kururi-kun, you’re acquainted with Iris, right?”

“Yeah, she’s my friend.”

“Apparently, the prince has taken a liking to her, and I even heard that recently they’ve been touring the electives together. So? Do you want to have a talk with our pure-hearted prince?”

I think it’s about time that I made myself clear.

“That doesn’t really have anything to do with me does it? You fall in love when you fall in love, why would any of that bother me?”

When I said that, he raised his hands in surrender, so I pressed on.

“In truth, aren’t you the one that’s the most worried about their relationship?”

He was one of Iris’s love candidates after all, but it’s kinda funny how he could be completely sidelined.

“How mean, rather than that I’m more interested in the secret relationship between you and Eliza, Kururi-kun, and as for how I feel about the prince, I guess I’ll be with him for another ten years or so? Though by then it’ll probably be hard to find a lover or two but anyways, right now I’ll just enjoy myself watching over the relationships of people like you.”

It looks like he’s also had a hard time.

Even so, digging into my open wounds is a different story.

Here, taste my organ attack!!

“You really don’t hold back, do you Kururi? Can’t say I don’t like that relentless side of you though.”

“Eh?!”

“…or not, at least not now.”

Hopefully I’m misunderstanding something.

I don’t want a man to fall for me!

“Its funny talking to you in person Kururi-kun. You’re completely different from how I thought you’d be. I figured you’d be more like the rest aristocracy somehow.”

“You thought I’d be more of a fool?”

“No, not that. It was more of a concern really, but it seems that sentimentality was unfounded. Sorry for looking at you that way until now, and hey, once you feel up to it, why don’t we have a chat sometime as friends?”

It looks like he’s blatantly trying to get me to talk about Eliza again.

Stopping this here would probably be the best decision.

“Well, for now lets just focus on the dissection.”

Rail responded to my call, “Sure.”

The two of us concentrated on the dissection for a while.

Rail looked slightly queasy, but he cleanly removed all the internal organs nonetheless.

“It looks like you have talent as a doctor, Rail.”

Unlike my motivation, he’s doing this in preparation in become a true doctor.

“Not really, I think people like Kururi-kun who can do such work without any resistance have the real talent.”

“I’m just more accustomed to this, that’s all. You’re the one who’s better at thinking about people.”

“Maybe, but I have a lot of bad parts too. By studying medicine in order to save lives, we could be robbing workers of opportunities they could have had in their lives. Somehow, thinking about the contradictions doesn’t swallow well with me.”

“That’s just the way human beings are, don’t we raise livestock just so that we can consume them later? Some things just need to be done at the expense of others.”

“If it’s because we need to eat, then I think it’s justified. We raised them lovingly, giving them a good life until they had to be used, so there’s no problem with that, but what about things like this? This child whose death came just so its body could be dissected on, whereas after it’ll just be discarded? I can’t help but feel sorry for something like that.”

“I don’t think that could’ve been helped though.”

“Its that, how human beings will ask a doctor for help if they need it, while non-humans won’t.” I continued.

“What do you mean?”

For some reason, Rail seems to seriously want to know my answer.

Again, it’s probably best to just tell him the simple stuff so he doesn’t think too deeply about it.

“I think there’s a fatal flaw with that your of thinking, of why you want to become a doctor.”

“Am I going about this wrong? Should I branch off somewhere else? I guess there are many different kinds of doctors out there.”

“More or less.”

“Yeah.”

“Kururi, you really are something aren’t you? Thanks for seriously listening to my story. Until this morning, all I wanted to do was make fun of your little bout with Eliza, but now I see you differently.”

Aren’t you still making fun of me though?!

I’ll be sure to return the favour someday!

“Now that all the internal organs are removed, now we just need to stitch the body up and we’ll be done.”

“…yeah.”

Rail’s face seems to have cramped up, but he was able to make it to the end. Good job.

After we had finished, I did my best to put up a bold front, letting out a big breath. *Fu~*

“Even so, it sure is hard to use these medical techniques. It’ll probably be even more so once somebody is on the brink of death in front of us. Though this’ll probably become a great skill to have in the future.”

“Then, do you want me to make you something to help you out?”

Even though it might be hard to do, now might be a good time to try it. Let’s try to create our own medical equipment.

“You’ll do that for me? I knew I wasn’t wrong about you!”

“Sure, but first we’ll need to go to my room, there’s something I need to retrieve first.”

“That sounds fun, so sure.”

Once we were finished cleaning up, the class was just about to end.

Among the students which left the class in droves, Rail headed over to the instructor.

“Is it okay if I take these children?”

“May I ask why?”

In Rail’s hands were the corpses of the guinea pigs we just dissected, all newly stitched up.

“Its because I think they deserve a better end than this, that’s the only reason why.”

“If you’ve taken a liking to them then sure, they’re all yours.”

With the permission of the instructor, Rail crammed the corpses into some linen bags.

“People always call me strange, but I think you’re pretty strange yourself Rail.” walking beside Rail, I talked to him about why he did that.

“Really?”

“Well, I guess it doesn’t matter really and hey, now that you’ve followed me this far, help me dig a hole.”

“Sure.”

* * *

After school, there was two people standing around the school gate.

We were in the middle of a vast land, so I don’t think they’ll mind wherever we dig.

We each had our own shovel, but we weren’t going to dig at once because we created a working system.

There weren’t many pedestrians around either, so it looks like the perfect conditions for digging a hole.

“Until I’ve had enough, I think I’ll be able to go along with sort of thing.”

While he was digging a hole, Rail said so.

“I think we can still keep going.”

“…yeah.”

zakku *zakku* (sfx: digging) the only thing that could be heard after that was the sound of digging into the soil.

“Is this really helping?”

I heard Rail’s voice call out.

“Oh, definitely so.”

Haha, Rail and I started laughing.

We were done, buried in the hole was all the guinea pigs in their jute bags.

“Now let’s go home-” Rail was about say as he started leaving.

“No, stay here for a minute.”

“Hmm?”

“There’s something that I want to see.”

‘Beyond the basics’, the 3rd grimoire. I wanted to try my ‘New Life’ spell.

Pouring my magic into the soil, I softly whispered “Now open your eyes.”

The soil seemed to bulge for second, before the seedlings of lush flowers sprouted out.

I don’t know what kind of flowers they’ll grow to be, but I certainly created a new life with this.

“…That’s a nice spell you got there.”

Rail smiled gently.

| ToC |

Chapter 7

“Shisho (Master), have you determined your electives yet?”

Today is the school’s weekend holiday, it’s kinda funny how today should be our break and yet Crossy came to my apartment for some reason.

“Hmm… Herbalism, as well as Medical Science, but I still still need to choose two more.”

“Is that so? I’ve gone with Martial Arts and Emperor studies, though the others are undecided still.”

With choosing electives it’s better to be careful and take your time choosing rather locking in a choice and regretting it later.

With my anxious feelings gone, I stopped tempering the iron I was working on. Looking over my shoulder I asked:

“Oh yeah, you weren’t together with Vaine today?”

“Yeah, today is the one holiday we get a week so he told me to use it to rest my body. Even so, I wonder where he disappeared to all of sudden? All sneaky like… the nerve of some people!”

“It’s his private day too you know, do try to forgive him.”

“…I guess it can’t be helped if Shisho says so.”

Crossy said so with puffed cheeks, showing that really he still hadn’t forgiven him. That’s good though, it looks like they’ve been getting along recently.

“Well, we still have some spare time, so what do you want to do Shisho?”

No, I don’t really have spare at all.

Really, I want to look through the Electives document, and then start studying the 4th grimoire now that I’m done with the 3rd.

Also, shouldn’t I be allowed to have some private time to myself?! I by no means have spare time.

“I don’t really have spare time, so why don’t you try to find out where Vaine tried to secretly escape to today?”

“Oh! That sounds interesting! Let’s go together, Shisho!”

This is bad, his eyes are shining. It really is heartwarming to see how much he wants to spend his time with me.

I feel a little bad for Vaine, but this is my important disciple’s spare time here.

…Ugh, I dug my own grave, and although it’s just a little, I’m curious as to what Vaine’s hiding. Where did he go today? This is a problem that must be investigated!

Says the no-good human that claims he has no free time, and then decides to just go along with whatever event that pops up.

“Then let’s go.”

“Yes!”

When looking for someone, first you need to narrow down the places they might be. Usually, you would first go to a tavern where the exchange rate for information is fixed, but unfortunately there is no tavern here. We do have the next best thing though, the cafeteria. If he’s there, Vaine will easily be found due to his large build.

Surely there has to be *someone* who had seen him.

Entering the cafeteria, we were unable to spot Vaine, so we decided to look around for somebody that would give information to us when we found a pair of girls gossiping with each other.

“Excuse me, but have either of you two seen a student named Vaine around?”

“Vaine is… that really tall person right? I think I saw him leaving the dormitory, but that’s all I know.”

“That’s perfect, thank you.”

After thanking the two of them, we left the cafeteria.

“At the very least, now we’re certain that he’s left the dormitory. Now, where to next?”

“He probably went to a place where’d he have enough space to train, so the park maybe?”

“Well it’s our best bet, so let’s go.”

Once we arrived at the playground, there were already a lot of people doing exercises in pairs, but no Vaine though.

Catching a girl who was still stretching, I decided to ask about Vaine.

“Him? Oh, yeah I saw him, he was jogging around here this morning, mumbling about ‘banishing evil thoughts’ or something.”

“So do you know where he went?”

“Not really, I saw him come out of the bathhouse, but I’m not sure where he went next.”

“Thanks, and good luck with your exercise. It would be nice if we could talk again someday.”

“Yeah, I’d like to speak with you again too, Kururi-san.”

After we finished our greetings with the girl, we left the park.

“So he really was here…”

Crossy placed his hand on his chin, thinking about where we should search next.

“Maybe he decided to leave school grounds?”

“It’s probably because you don’t leave school often, but it’s actually quite a walk to just get out there, so for now let’s go and check out the stable’s lending records.”

“Yeah.”

Though, what are we going to do if there is a record that Vaine took a horse? Are we going to chase after him? Even though I had a feeling that doing so would be fun, I think that would be the moment where it’d be better just to quit already.

“Vaine huh? Give me a second, I need to check over today’s records.”

We arrived at the stables, and the issue requested by me caused the clerk to immediately break out into a run.

Removing the lending roster, he opened it up to today’s date.

Tracing it over with his finger, he checked over the name’s carefully one by one.

“There aren’t any records of a student named Vaine, but I wonder… You said he was rather tall, to the point that it made him stick out, right? I saw someone like that earlier today.”

“Do you know where he went?”

“Yeah, last I saw him I think he was heading towards the fountain.”

“Really? Thanks.”

Bowing my head to the man in charge, the two of us continued our walk yet again.

“This time there isn’t enough information… there are a lot of fountains in the school” Crossy muttered regretfully.

“Not really, when people here refer to ‘the fountain’ there’s really only one place they could be referring to.”

I gave Crossy’s back a light pat.

“Ah! That’s true, Shisho!”

If I were to describe how Crossy looked right now, one could say he was walking with a spring in his step…

It was the same fountain that I checked out before, but I can’t say I really know the roads of the school that well.

In front of Crossy, who always praises me, somehow I’m able to put on a brave face, but in truth I’m a emotional wreck inside.

Before we had noticed it we were in the middle of a rose garden.

Where are we again? I really need to get more familiar with the school grounds.

“Shisho…”

“…”

I couldn’t see Crossy’s face because he was standing behind me, but I could imagine it…

What should I do?!

“Kururi?”

A familiar-sounding voice came out from the other side of a hedge covered in roses.

Walking around the hedge, I found myself face to face with Iris, both our eyes opening in surprise.

“Iris, boy am I glad to see you, I’m a little lost so can you give me a hand?”

“It’s a little hard to give directions for a road that can’t be seen though, would it be okay if I guided you?”

“Thanks, you save-”

I stopped my words mid-way because I suddenly noticed the sharp eyes glaring at me.

The gaze of the man standing a little bit away from Iris, the First Prince Arc.

They were on a date! No wonder he’s angry, I would be too if a nuisance suddenly walked in on one of mine.

What bad timing.

“…I wonder, would that be best? You were just enjoying the roses right now, so it’d probably be best if we looked for the pathway on our own. I wouldn’t want to interrupt you.”

“Thanks, but I can look at these anytime. I can’t just leave you alone if you’re in trouble Kururi.”

“No, you see…” with a gesture that was only visible to Iris, I pointed to Arc standing behind her.

She turned a glance behind her and said “Oh leave him be, he won’t mind. We’re only going for a short walk after all.”

None of my words got through to Iris at all!

The Arc that I could see was furious.

He was probably feeling something akin to “What the hell? Why’s he more important than me?”

While he continued to glare daggers towards me.

“…I-if you’re truly okay with it.”

“I am.”

Crossy and I were lead through the grounds by Iris, with a certain prince following not far behind.

Perhaps Crossy was bothered by Arc since he reluctantly kept close to me, and with a force that seemed to say he would be eaten if we were separated too.

…Iris? Did you just make a comment about Crossy and I? I heard that you know.

Crossy let go to walk beside Iris, telling her about where we needed to go so she could guide us properly.

Perhaps because I was too absorbed into their conversation, I forgot about the presence that was approaching me from behind.

I was given a warning, he said “I’m going to remember this, so you better watch out. I know your face, Kururi Helan.” the scary words of a horror film came from behind me.

The prince walked up beside me and continued to glare.

What are you going to do if Iris notices?! I wanted to say that, straight to his face even.

I couldn’t though, even if the Prince is hostile towards me I shouldn’t be fanning the flames here.

This is the moment where I should just pretend I haven’t noticed anything.

“This is kind of funny, just a little while ago Vaine was asking for directions too, I think he said he wanted to go to the fountain..”

“Really?! Vaine came here?!”

“Yeah, I acted as his guide, and when we returned to the rose garden you and Kururi were there.”

“Iris, which fountain did he go to?”

“I’m your guide, just give me a minute and I’ll show you.”

With Iris as our guide, we finally reached the fountain we were looking for. Its too bad we had to split up.

Iris said that she would guide us until the end, but we had refused. According to Crossy at the pace we were going, Vaine would already be long gone, so once we got close enough to explain directions, we split.

Ugh… Right after Eliza, I just had to go on and anger the First Prince too. Ahh, I can see my life coming to an end in a ‘accident’ soon.

I even resolved myself to not get involved as much as possible too…

“There’s the fountain.”

Crossy said so while walking.

The huge fountain I saw the other day was in front of me yet again.

“Shisho, lets hide.”

I obediently followed Crossy’s advice, who was already hiding in a bush big enough for two people.

Now that I think about it, haven’t I been in a similar situation like this before?

In our lines of sight, the fountain finally came back down revealing them.

Staring at eachother passionately, was the pair of Vaine and a girl I’ve never seen before.

“Wah, Shisho, this is…”

“No doubt about it…”

A confession!

To think that only one week after school had started, that one could already have someone fall for them! Good job Vaine! You truly are enjoying your youth to the fullest!

!

Surprisingly, it was the girl who started talking first.

“Vaine…”

The voice of the girl was trembling slightly.

She really was quite a beauty once we got a good look at her face, and she looked even more so when compared to Vaine’s.

“That girl, she’s a girl in the C-class just like I am.”

I noticed that Crossy said so in a low voice.

Though its his face which really made an impression on me.

“Thank you for coming out here today.”

The girl took a step forward, continuously darting her eyes between the ground and Vaine.

“Woah Shisho, for some reason my face has become hot as well.”

“Me too, but Crossy…”

Maybe if I was a girl, I would be squealing at this moment like “Aiiieee~”.

“Tell me what you need to, and make it brief.”

Vaine’s miscellaneous words were cruelly thrown at the other party.

That’s not what you’re supposed to say! Crossy was probably thinking the same thing, scrunching his eyebrows. This couldn’t help but frustrate me a little.

“Shisho, that guy is an idiot, will he be okay?”

“I don’t know, let’s just spectate for the time being.”

Our voices had become slightly louder do to our excitement.

Wait, don’t we actually look really disturbing right now?

This is bad! This is going to ruin our images! What do we do?!

“Oh umm… I…”

“What?”

“That, from the first meeting… about Vaine-san…”

“What about me?”

The girl’s voice didn’t come out of her trembling lips.

Don’t rush it! Also what the hell are you saying to her man?!

I myself would’ve tried grabbing her shoulders to steady her.

“Now! Go for it!” Crossy and I cheered as we blushed.

This’ll be bad if our voices get any louder.

“Vaine-san! I fell in love with you at the very moment I first saw you!”

Gathering her courage, she shot out her confession with a strong and lifted voice.

Crossy looked like he was about to faint.

This is dangerous, all my blood vessels are going *lub-dub* (sfx: heartbeat), if it got any louder I think they could hear it.

“…really?”

Without changing his look, Vaine responded.

To the girl, Crossy and I, we were all hung on hearing what his next words would be…

…

Hey! Say something! Don’t just go quiet here!

“C-can we start dating?” The girl stuttered out the following words.

“I’m sorry, it’s no good.”

Vaine cut down the girl’s courage cold.

“…am I not good enough?”

“Ah, totally not good enough.”

Don’t you have any kinder words than that?! If I had a sword right now I’d stab you with it! What do you mean ‘not good enough’?! Isn’t she quite the beauty?!

“Shisho, is it okay if I beat him up later?”

“Approved! I’ll allow it! For now though, how will she respond?”

“Please, can you tell me why? If you can’t, there’s no way I could give up like this.”

“Why?”

Vaine nodded once, and began to speak.

“My school life is fun thanks to my friends, and I have a lot of plans with them. That’s why I’m just too busy to deal with something like that.”

“I-I understand… Thank you for coming today…”

The girl squeaked out in a creaky voice, said goodbye, and ran away as quickly as possible.

“Shisho, are those friends he’s referring to us?”

“Probably.”

“Shisho, do you want to get a hit in too?”

“Yeah.”

“Shisho, that guy’s an idiot.”

“Yes, yes he is…”

| ToC |

Chapter 8

The first Magic Science class is being taught in the park today, so Vaine and I arrived there early in the morning after waking up.

There sure is some spare time until class starts though, maybe we should do a little training as we wait.

Crossy doesn’t really get up on weekday mornings, so we followed through the stretches with just the two of us.

First, with our backs to each other, we connected our arms, and taking turns we bent over, stretching each other overhead.

“Uuu~”

My body feels good with that stretch, and my drowsiness has completely disappeared. Its also nice being able to see things from this angle.

“Uuu~”

Now it’s my turn to pick up Vaine. Ah! Yup, he’s heavy, I think I just broke my hip.

“Yesterday, even though I was reading it all night long, I couldn’t understand the spellbook I got from home at all.”

I said back over to Vaine while I helped him stretch.

“I see, so Kururi *does* need to study.”

“Vaine, how about you, what’d you do yesterday?”

“Hmph!”, Vaine stretched with heavy breath before answering.

“Yesterday I was practicing my swordplay.”

“Swordplay huh? That’s rather diligent of you.”

With my reply, for some reason Vaine stopped moving, he just stood there without even acknowledging that he stopped.

Since it was my turn to stretch, I turned my neck towards him in dissatisfaction.

“Ah.”

That’s when I saw it. To my left, right in front of Vaine.

…it was a cat.

A human sized cat.

Was it lion?! Nope, it was a cat. Vaine probably stopped moving because of this.

Its face wasn’t one that said it had a terrible attitude, in fact, its eyes were actually a little cute.

Somehow it also gives off the atmosphere of a kitten.

Even if it is a kitten though, it’s big. Even though it’s a cat, it’s the size of a human. A huge furball.

“Good morning, nyaa~”

It just spoke.

It just spoke to us.

“Hey Vaine, do you want to go somewhere together with Crossy and I this weekend? Just the three of us.”

“Hey, don’t just ignore meow~”

“Oh, that sounds nice.”

“You’re ignoring meow too, big guy?”

Big?! Isn’t that what we should be calling you?! …Don’t answer that.

Is this a dream?!

“Vaine, pinch me.”

“This isn’t a dream, nyaa.”

Vaine and I released arms, and confronted the reality that was in front of us.

“Who are you?”

No, What are you?

“The Magic Science Sensei(instructor), nyaa.”

“Really? …and why are you a cat?”

Vaine, hey! Did I just hear you right?! You’re going straight to the point just like that?!

“What’s the problem with that, does your teacher have to be a human, nyaa?”

To that response, Vaine whispered in my ear.

“This is dangerous.”

“Definitely dangerous.” I whispered back.

“Don’t be afraid, nyaa. I’m just your Sensei, nyaa.”

Or so you say with that nonchalantly cute face of yours, but what are your true intentions? I can’t help but feel a little suspicious.

“Then what’s your name then, Sensei?”

I asked gingerly.

“There are no names for cats without owners, nyaa~ Is that nyat common sense? What’s wrong with you people, nyaa?”

Oh, um… sorry about that.

“Then, Sensei?”

Vaine summoned up his courage and raised his hand.

“What is it, nyaa?”

“Sensei, are you a boy cat, or a girl cat?”

“I’m a girl, nyaa! How rude, nyaa!”

Oh, umm… sorry. Vaine was probably thinking the same thing.

“Even so, you! Big guy! That no good, nyaa! Your body is strong, but your magic is so weak I can barely feel it trickle out, nyaa.”

Whew, she wasn’t referring to me. As I was sighing, she put her hand on my shoulder.

No, her paw! She just put her paw on my shoulder!

“You should learn from this one, nyaa! His body is thin compared to yours, but… nyeah, an amazing amount of

magic is overflowing from him, going ‘Doppyu Doppyu (sfx: something being powerfully ejected)’, nyaa.”

I’m happy about the compliment, but stop looking at me like that!

“You look like a promising student, nyaa. What’s your nyame?”

“I’m Kururi.”

“Kururi-chan, nyaa? I’ll remember that, nyaa.”

Vaine placed his hand on my shoulder too, what a chilling moment.

What?! What are you thinking about?! No, don’t answer that! I already know!

“Umm… Neko-sensei!”

“What is it, nyaa? Do you nyeed something Kururi-chan?”

“Neko-sensei is the instructor for magic science, right? So does that mean you can use magic?”

“Nyeah, of course.”

As she said so, Neko-sensei activated soil magic, creating an image of herself in the dirt.

I think her feet were a bit longer, and her eyes were sharper, but let’s not worry about that now.

“What do you think, nyaa?”

Closing in on Vaine’s ear, I whispered.

“Is she the real thing?”

“I think so.”

“What are you guys whispering about, nyaa~? Since a while ago.”

“I have a question! Neko-sensei, how much do you sleep in one day?”

“About fourteen hours, nyaa.”

Oh, just like a normal cat.

“Umm… You’re a cat.” Vaine said in an undertone.

“A big one.”

“What of it, nyaa? I can still teach you magic, nyeah? Why don’t we study a bit for meow, since it’s still too early for class to start anyways. A little prelude to what I can expect from you in class perhaps, nyaa?. ”

Saying “Go on, don’t be shy”, she rushed Vaine into using magic.

With his magical power, he changed the area in his palm into an open flame.

After looking at the flame for a while, Neko-sensei started shaking her head, “That’s no good, nyaa. Meow why don’t you try Kururi-chan?”

Feeling useless, Vaine went to sit down beside Neko-sensei with his head hung down.

Whatever, lets do this.

It was my turn, so trying to think of something that others wouldn’t do, I created an image with the same dimensions of Neko-sensei in my head. Creating the materials and changing their form into the shape I thought of while maintaining it.

It’s something that I mastered quite a while ago.

“Nyeah, your artistic sense is no good. It’s not beautiful enough, nyaa. Though that was a beginner level spell… Well, okay you pass nyaa.”

“Thanks!”

“Now, lets try making that again, nyeah?”

And so began my training in how to create the ideal form of Neko-sensei.

‘The feet are too short, nyaa!’, ‘Take a good look at me nyaa! You really think I look like that, nyaa?!’ and so on.

* * *

“Neko-sensei, what is magic in the first place?”

“That a secret, nyaa. You and Vaine-chan over there are outsiders so I can’t say, nyaa.”

Although Vaine didn’t seem to be that interested, isn’t this a good chance?

Not even the spell books written by Chris Helan could describe what magic really was.

Magic is special, there’s even unique magic that can take the world for a spin if it wanted too.

“Just study hard, and maybe you’ll find out, nyeah?”

Neko-sensei answered as if she was reading my thoughts.

“What an irregular study session, nyaa. How capricious, nyaa.”

She’s a cat!

“Adding meat to it is good nyaa, but salt is no good, nyaa.”

She’s a cat!!

“How you’re scratching me is no good, nyaa. Doing it like this is only sexual harassment, nyaa. You can scratch me just under the chin if you want nyaa.”

She’s a girl!!! …I mean, cat!

* * *

Vaine and I practiced with Neko-sensei until we were tired, and eventually the other students started to appear in droves.

Everyone was like ‘A cat! It’s huge!’ and so on.

Please don’t do this anymore! I already did this earlier!!

After all the students finally began to calm down, Neko-sensei finally began her lesson.

“First lets see you’re magic output nyeah? Lets practice changing its form first, so today we’ll just focus on an easy nature change spell nyaa.”

I lighted a box into flames on the palm of my hand.

This much is easy.

Hmm… later let’s see how far I can take this spell.

Without difficulty about a third of the class was able to cast the spell. This is the A-class too… I wonder how much the other classes struggle?

Looking around, the prince and Rail were able to cast it without difficulty.

Vaine was only able to produce a small amount, resulting in him getting chastised by Neko-sensei “You’re still only leaking out a small amount, nyaa. You should work more on your output nyaa.”

“You have potential, nyaa. Same with you, nyaa.”

Neko-sensei stopped her feet in front of Eliza and Iris.

Ever since that matter with Eliza, she’s glared at me whenever she got the chance. I wonder if she’s in a good mood today though?

A sharp amount of ice suddenly spread across the ground from Eliza. Well, that answers that question.

Luckily nature change was one of Iris’s specialties, so she easily melted it, turning it back into clean water.

Although recently I’ve heard rumors about her relationship with the prince here and there, it seems like it’s still developing.

For the two to really fall in love, first they need to overcome Eliza’s bullying. Fortunately for them, it looks like Eliza is targeting me right now instead.

Eliza, I’m properly doing my work here you know?

So you can stop glaring at me you know?! It’s unnecessary! Like come on! Why me!

“Hey, Kururi.”

Shamelessly, Prince Arc approached me while calling me out.

Are you here for what I did during your date before?!

I’m just one guy! Again, why me?!

“It looks like you know your way around magic as well. So why don’t you and I have a match? Well? What do you think?”

“Stop it Arc, aren’t you troubling Kururi-kun? I’m sorry the prince said something so strange all of a sudden.”

The first prince was pulled away by Rail, returning to his original position.

Hugh!

Somehow, I was saved.

Neko-sensei walked around, giving advice to each individual.

She’s a surprisingly empathetic teacher, unlike her appearance.

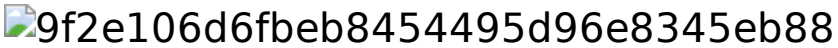
“That’s no good, nyaa. You need to focus more on the hip.”

“You’re a bit too horny nyaa. Don’t just go and touch that stuff, nyaa.”

“How old am I, nyaa?! Why would you ask something like that, nyaa?!”

She’s a serious teacher… probably.

TN: They’re probably stretching like this if you’re curious.



| ToC |

Chapter 9

Opening the classroom door, the first thing that came into my sight was a naked girl peacefully sleeping there.

The light coming through the window slightly reflected off of her hair giving off the impression that she was glowing.

Her big, attractive eyes were closed, and the peaceful sound of her breathing softly resounded throughout the room.

And her plump, protruding butt, including her most important parts were completely exposed.

…Well, it was only Neko-sensei though.

“Sensei, I’m here.”

I gave the Neko-sensei who was currently laying down a light shake. A small “Ofu~” was her response, continuing to speak..

What should I do? Should I call out to her?.

“Sensei please wake up, it’s me, Kururi Helan.”

“…nyaa? Ohh, its Kururi-chan nyaa. Welcome nyaa~”

“I’m here because you called me for something, so what did you need?”

“I called you here on the matter of magic research, nyaa. Nyeah, you have to wait a bit because I called another person here too.”

“Another person?”

“Nyeah, I called Arc-chan nyaa. The two of you were specifically called to help with research because you’re the best students I have nyaa.”

Ugh, she invited the number one person I don’t want to get involved with, and it’s him, the first prince, there’s a big chance he’ll bring that *other* person I don’t really want to get involved with.

It’s not even worth mentioning why I don’t want to be involved with them, I’m scared.

Well, if we get to use magic, I wonder if I can cast <<Sub-zero>> in self defence if I need to.

“Why don’t you give me a massage while we’re waiting, nyeah? Recently, a lot of my accumulated fatigue seems to have gathered around my waist, nyaa.”

“Sure, I don’t really mind.”

Sitting down next to Neko-sensei, I started to firmly massage her hips.

“Oh~ Ahn~ Nyan~”

“Can you stop please? That voice is a little…”

“Don’t mind it, nyaa. Now go on, don’t stop meow.”

After that, she continued her moans and the occasional “ufu” during the massage, despite the fact I was glaring at her.

“I’m here, stray.”

With the opening of the door was the appearance of the First Prince, Arc.

He still seems a bit hostile towards me. I’m glad he’s finally here, but there’s more than enough space here for us to keep our distance even if Neko-sensei is here too.

“Oh? So Kururi’s here too huh?”

“Well it’s nice to see you too, *Prince.*” I replied with a smile, it was only a formality though, I honestly didn’t care about how I greeted him, really.

Even so, the prince’s face twitched in response to the tone I just took to him.

Wait… now that I think about it, isn’t this really bad? Didn’t I just offend the prince of the country I live in without thinking?!

“Nyaa, now that we’re all present, why don’t we start?”

“If you will.”

“Right now I’m going to teach the two of you my unique magic <<Transform>>, nyaa. With this spell you can freely

change into other forms as you wish, and I'll give bonus points if it's a cat nyaa. It's convenient but, nyeah. Every year I try to teach it to four or five students I take a liking to but barely anybody actually succeeds in using it nyaa."

"Is that why Sensei's appearance is that of a cat?"

"That's wrong, nyaa. This is my original appearance nyaa."

…Is that so?

"First you need to envelop your body in a veil of magic power, nyaa. As if you're wearing a costume, nyaa."

Following her instructions, I tried imitating Neko-sensei.

As I was covering my body with my magic, I envisioned myself being put inside a stuffed toy.

Oh, somehow I can feel something warm welling up inside of me.

"That's good, nyaa. Kururi-chan has a good sense for magic nyaa."

On the other hand, the prince seemed to be having trouble with it.

"No, nyaa. Try to imitate me nyaa."

"Damn, if he can do it, there's no reason why I won't be able to."

He’s awfully aware of me, isn’t he? Just don’t cause any trouble for me.

“You need to let out more nyaa. You’re young, so there shouldn’t be a problem of getting it out because there’s not enough nyaa.”

Neko-sensei is… teaching him, right? Well, disregarding her teaching methods, it seems like Arc was eventually able to grasp the idea behind it.

It would’ve been better though if he just obediently imitated her in the beginning. All he did was waste our time messing around.

“Fu~, I’ve caught up to you, Kururi.”

So what? The only reason why I’m still at this step is because I couldn’t proceed without Neko-sensei’s instructions.

During the time that you were repeating the same mistakes over and over again, I probably would’ve been leagues ahead of you by now.

“The next step is to utilize the magic wrapped around you nyaa. For now, just try changing your hand. The two of you are now changing the ‘substance’ with magic, nyaa. You should be able to do it, after activation all you need to do is maintain your magic supply to it. You can alter it however you wish nyaa. Now try it, engrave the image in your head onto your hand nyaa. ”

Neko-sensei showed us an example.

In the blink of an eye, her paw became the hand of a normal human.

Both the prince and I exclaimed “” Oh~”” at this sight.

“The more you try to change it the more difficult the process becomes nyaa. Look closely because I’m going to change it back meow, but really, this arm just isn’t beautiful at all.”

Neko-sensei’s ‘hand’ smoothly changed back to its original form. The paws are cute, but you didn’t think that arm was beautiful? I don’t really understand Neko-sensei’s aesthetics at all.

After confirming it with Neko-sensei, I tried imitating her.

It was there for an instant, but my hand almost immediately changed back to normal after.

Certainly, this is rather difficult.

“Don’t try to go all out at the beginning, nyaa. You’ll use up your stamina too quickly nyaa. Focus, and try to get used to it one step at a time, nyaa. For young people like you there’s a tendency to lose your concentration when you’re excited nyaa.”

“That’s… true.” I feel sick, I guess I haven’t removed all my evil thoughts yet.

It can’t be helped.

Time steadily passed while I diligently practiced.

The prince was also concentrating hard.

Before I knew it, the sun was already about to set.

“I did it!” Just now my hand had clearly changed, and it didn’t even revert back! Is this a success?!

I raised my hand to show Neko-sensei my achievement.

“That’s amazing nyaa. To get it done so quickly, Kururi-chan must be a genius nyaa.”

With her body covered in the light of the sunset, Neko-sensei answered while still in her napping pose.

“D-does this mean I’ve succeeded?”

“You’ve succeeded nyaa! You can come back for the next step later nyaa. So for now, why don’t you go home, masturbate(□□□□), and get some sleep nyaa?”

“Thanks, I will!”

I’ll make sure to sleep… steadily(□□□□)? Whatever that means.

I canceled the magic turning my hand back to normal, though doing this feels strange for some reason.

“Thanks for the good work, Neko-sensei.”

“I’m tired, nyaa. Let me sleep meow…”

“Wait!”

As I left to go back to the dormitories, a loud voice called out to me from the classroom. Of course, it was none other than the prince Arc, who was currently giving me another of his sharp glares.

Great, I’m going to get sucked into more trouble.

“What?”

“Hey, what you did there… tell me.”

I see. It was probably mortifying to him that I was able to figure it out first, but he must be even more ashamed that he couldn’t figure it out himself while we were practicing, and now he wants me to tell him how I did it.

Now, what to do…?

“Okay, sure.”

Since Neko-sensei is too lazy to teach anymore, I’ll show you how.

Just like how Neko-sensei taught us, I tried to convey how I interpreted it.

“I don’t understand! Explain it better!”

This is what I meant by trouble.

In response, I said “Let’s just do this patiently” with a smile.

Eventually evening turned into night, but the prince wasn’t able to do it.

“Not bad nyaa. Close, but not quite nyaa. You need to quit those bad habits of yours prince, nyeah.” To Neko-sensei’s words the prince seemed to be a little depressed.

“Hmm, I’m feeling a little hungry now.”

With the prince in tow, the two of us walked over to the dining hall. It’s nice that we can still eat even though it’s already late.

“You might be ahead of me for now, but I’ll be the one to complete it first.”

“Yeah yeah, whatever you say.”

A tired opponent sure is troublesome huh?

“Anyways, what’s your relationship with Iris?”

Straight to the point huh? I would think that royalty of all people would have a little tact to them, but I guess not.

What should I do in this situation? Or what shouldn’t I do, so that he doesn’t get the wrong idea.

“We’re friends.”

“What? Is that all?”

“I wonder? What kind of relationship do you think we have?”

“What did you say?! Hey, what do you mean by that?!”

Overreacting a little bit, he accidentally spat some of the water he was drinking at me.

“It was a just a joke, I’m joking alright?”

“…really?”

“Really, we’re just friends.” We actually have a relationship where we slept together in the same carriage for five days straight! …that probably wouldn’t be the best thing to say right now.

I don’t want him to get angry.

“Ugh, but even *that* Rail has a high opinion of you! The same Rail that never compliments anyone! There’s no way you’re an ordinary guy!!”

Oh, the other troublesome person.

So he also troubled the prince huh? That’s kind of funny.

…and Iris is supposed to see *this guy* as her ‘Prince on a white horse’ that protected her from Eliza?

She has way too high an opinion of him.

“Well, wasn’t this nice?”

With an undertone to bite back him just a little, I finished my meal.

Finished my dinner, I said I light goodbye as I walked away, “Now then prince, I’m going to head back to the dorms no-”

Suddenly my shoulder was grabbed with a strong grip.

I honestly didn’t want to turn around, but I did so anyway.

“Wait, who said that you could go to sleep? I still haven’t finished my special training yet.”

“Let go, it’s creepy. You can go ahead and do it without me.”

“And what do you need to do that’s more important than this? Tell me.”

“I was in the middle of smithing a spear when I was called over. I’d prefer to finish it before the end of the day.” Of course, this was a lie.

This was just an excuse so I could get out of here as quickly as possible.

“What are you making?”

“Swords and other weapons, like this one.” I showed him the sword at my waist.

“Wait, isn’t this of the same work as some of my magic sword collection in the Imperial Capital?!”

Magic sword collection?!

…how much would that be worth??!

“If I said I was the creator, would you really believe me? These are magic swords afterall.”

“‘A young genius that can create magic swords with ease’ right? If these suddenly appeared in the market, each one could be sold for an arm and a leg, enough to live as a commoner for a lifetime.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. There’ s nothing special about this sword, I just made it, that’s all. So why don’t you let go so I can go home already?”

By all means, please let go!! Please, I beg of you!!

“Hmm… well why don’t we first confirm if you really are the genius in the story, Kururi Helan. Let’s be off to your room immediately.”

“Yeah?”

Wait, why my room?

After the two of us left the dining hall, we talked on our way to my room.

“By the way, the swords I make, I’m not giving them to you. I just want to say this, but they belong to me. Promise me that you’ll follow what I say. Oh, and by the way how much were those swords you were talking about a while ago worth? I’m a bit curious.”

“Hey, don’t just suddenly become talkative, and when did I ever say I was interested in something like that? You’ve just been saying whatever you wanted since a while ago.”

“No, promise me you won’t tell anyone else about that blacksmith.”

“I already have, and among those I’ve told is my brother Lasa. Hey, while we’re talking about him, what’s your opinion of my brother?”

“Lasa-kun is a great person, and I know that he’ll make a great king someday.”

“Watch it.”

A bad mood suddenly enveloped us, so I think it’d be best to stop now.

When you use a lot of magic like we did today, it’d be good to rest.

As we returned to my room, Vaine and Crossy were there doing muscle training.

…again, why my room?

“Its hard training the bottom, but if you can do it the balance of your movements will improve. Its painful but why don’t we do another set?”

“You said I could take a break three sets ago!”

“Well, I’ll let you go after another three sets then.

“Hiiiiii!”

How fun, but can’t you do this in your own rooms?

“Hey, what are you doing in a room that isn’t yours?”

“Oh, we don’t mind. In fact, we can concentrate a little better when there’s some noise.”

Why am I being treated like the intruder?!

“No, I mean now my room’s all hot and humid now, and don’t you two know what hour it is?”

Trouble seems to have following me today, can’t you two notice what you’re doing?

“Well, I just returned from a lesson with Neko-sensei, so can you take my feelings into consideration, please? You can come back later, okay?”

“Understood! Let’s~ go!” Crossy gestured to Vaine, and the two of them left.

It’s already midnight after all.

They’ll probably be back by tomorrow though, so isn’t it useless of me to scold them? And even with them gone, I don’t think the person behind me is going to leave either.

Vaine and Crossy had left the room somewhat hot too… Oh well, nothing I can do about that, might as well start the special training again.

Ah, I miss having a room to myself.

Suddenly, someone started knocking on my door roughly.

Now what?! So late at night too, what a weird person.

When I opened the door, there stood a man that I didn’t know at all.

“Your room is too noisy! It’s driving me insane!”

Ugh, I know! It’s driving me insane too!

“And it’s not just today! Almost every single night, you always make so much noise! It’s always this room or the moans of men and women in the garden! Just stop already! Its annoying!”

Excuse me! Those moans you've been hearing aren't my fault!

"What? Is there a problem here?"

Listening in on the dispute Prince Arc drew near.

"The prince?! Why are you in a place like this?!"

The student who came to complain was puzzled.

"Well why do I have to tell you?"

"No, that's not what I-"

"Go back to your room, or would you rather be sent back to your territory instead?"

"Ah, no. Sorry, good night."

I'm so sorry-!!!

Even though I didn't like the attitude he was taking with me, did you really have to abuse your power like that?! Now I'll have to get him a souvenir or something to apologize!

"Geez, now then, let's continue the training."

...is what he said, but his first 'retry' after we started again ended up with his success!

“”Ooh!!”” thank you second floor resident for interrupting us! You’re good luck!

“…you did it.”

“…I did it? I did it!!” Before I noticed it, the two of us were jumping up and down, hugging each other.

Suu~ (sfx: Breath out) Once our excitement finally subsided, we calmly distanced ourselves from each other.

“Before the end of today, I want to successfully use the spell at least one more time.”

No, it’s already past midnight! Its tomorrow, so go home already!

| ToC |

Chapter 10

“Kururi!”

After school, I was called out to by a soothing voice while I was on my way to the herbalism classroom.

Turning towards it, there I saw Iris waving her hand at me.

“Where are you going?”

“Oh, I just on my way to the herbalism classroom.”

“That’s cool, I was a little interested in herbalism but I didn’t take it. Is it okay if I come along and check it out?”

“Of course it is, let’s go.”

“‘Kay.”

I guess it was because I had Iris following behind me today, I was feeling a little nervous.

“Are you worried about something?”

“Oh, uh… no, its nothing.”

I just hope that the first prince doesn’t see this.

According to the story I was told by Rail, he seems to have been tailing her recently.

Our pure-hearted prince might’ve made a nice companion if the feelings were mutual, but if they’re only one-sided then

he’s just being some creepy stalker right now.

Who knows? Maybe Iris is here because she found out and is trying to keep her distance at the moment.

I wonder, will things really be okay if the prince’s first love doesn’t work out?

If it doesn’t work out… I don’t even want to think about what he’ll do, it doesn’t leave a good feeling in my stomach.

“Have you decided on your electives yet?”

While I was thinking about such things, Iris posed a question on me.

“Herbalism, Medical Science, Animal Husbandry, and Accounting. I still have to officially register in some of them though.”

“That’s amazing, I’m a bit envious of that determination you have there. Currently I’m in Law, Geology, and Biology, but I still haven’t decided what the last one should be. The deadline is just around the corner too…”

From your current choices, I’d recommend taking another one of the science electives, but hey, its your choice in the end. I’d prefer it if you became friends with normal people that share your own interests. Though I’d like that myself as well, for some reason weird people always gather around me.

“We’ve arrived at our destination, the greenhouses.”

After opening the entrance to the vinyl house, and disinfecting ourselves at the sterilization area, we went in.

There was one person in the center of it all, who was muttering something as he worked.

It was Toto.

“Welcome, and by the way, who’s the intruder you have there?”

Toto gave a greeting as we entered, but apparently he didn’t like Iris’ presence here too much.

Well, he doesn’t really like people in general though.

Come to think of it, he’s wearing the cloak he uses to ward people off today.

“W-well, don’t be so cold. This here is Iris, and you don’t need to be so wary of her, she’s a good person.”

“I’ll be the one to decide that.”

Toto took some distance from us, while giving Iris a cautious glare.

“As you heard that guy’s name is Toto, and don’t mind his attitude, that’s just the way he is.”

“Did I do something offensive?”

“Don’t worry about it. Anyways Toto and I have some work to do, you’re free to look around but just don’t touch anything. Some of the herbs here are actually really dangerous despite their looks, be sure to ask me first if you’re curious about anything.”

“Yes, understood.”

After convincing him to take off his anti-personnel cloak, Toto then gave me a progress report.

“The beauty herbs that you’ve requested are going well, but I still need to conduct more experiments.”

He then showed me a white herb whose leaves looked like they were covered in frost.

“It was hard cultivating a herb with the various demands you gave me, making skin smooth, removing blemishes, and anti-aging. None of them seem to meet the all the requirements, but here I was able to make a herb to remove blemishes in the skin.”

“Is that so? Then can I assume there aren’t any side-effects?”

“There aren’t, the only thing is that it works a little too well, when someone takes it the blemishes on their skin will disappear, but they’ll turn as pale as a ghost instead.”

“What happened to the one who tried it?!”

“Oh don’t worry, I didn’t take it.”

That’s what I’m worried about! Please stop!

“Please stop, you’re taking your experiments too far again. Anyways did you think of any integration techniques? For example, using the hot spring water not just for bathing, but for drinking as well.”

“Hmm… not at this stage, no.”

“I see, well I look forward to your next progress report.”

“Oh actually, I have something you might want to look at-.”

“Kururi!”

As my conversation with Toto was interrupted by Iris, he looked a little cranky.

“That’s what I’m talking about, that’s an intruder, why’s she here?”

“Don’t say that. Yeah?! What is it Iris?!”

I called out to Iris who was a short distance away.

“Here! Over here! What’s with this Silver vine?! It’s huge!”

Silver vine? What’s that?

“Hey Toto, what’s that?”

“Oh, I’m growing it because I was requested to by Neko-sensei. She didn’t want me to grow multiple small ones, so it was a bit troublesome, but the pay was good so I beared with it. I think she said ‘Small ones just don’t satisfy me, nyaa. I want you to give me a large one, nyaa. The name of the plant I want is called a Silver vine, nyaa.’”

Neko-sensei… Just what the hell are you asking the students to do?!

Iris happily rushed over here.

“Hey, how did you grow it so large?! That’s amazing!!” her eyes were shining, giving off the feeling of an innocent maiden.

“Its nothing special really, that’s just the result of some cross breeding I’ve done, simple.”

“That’s not true at all! To be able to breed something that grows in a specific way is amazing!”

That’s good, it looks like the bad air between the two of them is clearing.

Though I can’t help but feel like this is more because of Iris’ competitive spirit than anything else.

She’s truly praising Toto, but I think she also really wants to know his secret to growing large crops.

“Hey, would you be able to do the same thing for plants like vegetables?”

“Of course, nothing is impossible for me when it comes to plants.”

“C-can you by any chance tell me how to do it?”

Iris approached Toto with a jerk, and looked into his face.

Toto looked a little uncomfortable, and asked me for help with his eyes.

“Iris, for the time being calm down. Toto, is it okay if you tell us?”

“Although I don’t mind, it’s not like I can show you right now. It’s possible, but I’d need some time to research it first. Would you mind putting off our plan to look into something like this?”

“I don’t mind.”

Iris doesn’t look like she can wait any longer, or at least that’s what I could tell from the sparkle in her eyes.

I guess it can’t be helped if she’s curious.

“Fu, it’s hard being a genius.”

Toto sure is proud of his talent.

It makes me happy knowing that he doesn’t seem to hate Iris right now.

Incidentally, this might be a good investment in for the future, so I’ll try learning it too.

“We’ll just do the beginning today, because I can’t be teaching all the time, and I need to show Kururi some progress with my research results.”

“Yes, thank you!”

Iris gripped Toto’s hands and thanked him.

Toto asked me for help with his eyes again.

“Calm down Iris, we’re only starting so there’s no way we’d be able to finish in just one day.”

“Yes, of course and by the way, Toto you’re also in Herbalism right?”

“Of course.”

“Then I should take Herbalism too!”

That was probably Iris’s brightest voice today, talking about herbs while jumping up and down.

A bit after Iris calmed down and started touring the herbs again…

“She’s amazing, right?”

“Well, she’s not too bad.”

That shine in his eye… don’t tell me, did he fall for Iris?!

What a confusing love, there’s sure to be problems in the future if it succeeds.

I wonder what the family tree would look like?

“Anyways, what I was trying to tell you was I have this herb that might interest you. I just thought of it right now.”

“Oh, so you had something like that?”

“A bit I guess, here, follow me.”

He brought me a isolated space further into the greenhouse.

The area we entered was hot and humid, it must’ve been a environment maintained with magic.

“This is it.”

Toto pointed at some herbs, they had leaves that overlapped on top of each other for many layers.

Each leaf is about the size of my face, each one overlapping about ten times.

The stem connected to them were thick and steady.

This is the first time I’ve ever seen a herb like this. It must be one of his original crops.

“Place one of these leaves on your face, and it’ll cure all your skin troubles overnight. While the leaves may repair cell damage, it needs to be fresh. After you tear it you have maybe ten hours before it stops working and dies, but that’s the perfect amount of time if you need to get some sleep.”

A face pack?! You created a natural face pack?!

You’re a genius!!!

“This is amazing!! This will sell, this will definitely sell!!”

“That’s what I thought as well.”

“This is great! This will be our main product! No matter what, make sure that it’s complete by summer break!”

“Sure, but I’m still developing it though, I don’t know when it’ll be finished.”

“While we’re on the topic, have you confirmed any side-effects? I know it affects the skin, but how? Do the users have healthy skin after?”

“Don’t worry. My neighbor had recently developed acne do to stress, but after using it it all disappeared without any trace of it left.”

Your neighbor?! Did you just say you were experimenting on your neighbor?!

So that’s the victim!!

Still, this is awesome, this is really lucrative stuff.

“I hope to improve its effect in making skin soft and elastic, but I also want to see if I can make it leave a healing scent behind as well, what do you think?”

Aromatherapy?! As in healing people with scents?!

If you can do that, you really are a genius!!

“Of course, do it! No, please do it!!”

“Okay! I’ll do it!!”

This is likely going to become a great commodity in the future.

I can’t stop myself from grinning.

Though when I returned to see Iris, I tried to get rid of that creepy face I had.

“Hey, did you have fun?”

“…lots of fun.”

“What was that anyway? I could hear the the two of your happy voices even from here. Am I really that much of a bother?”

“No, that’s not it at all.”

Toto then answered, “It’s because I developed a herb that helps maintain one’s skin.”

Iris let out a “Eh~” with a leaky voice.

I guess normal people would need a bit more of an explanation right?

“I’ll tell you this so you don’t misunderstand, but we’re developing this to sell in the Helan territory.”

“Oh, so that’s why.”

It’s a good thing the misunderstanding is resolved.

“How amazing, to accomplish such a thing with only two people, as expected of nobles.”

Toto didn’t reply to this, I guess he didn’t like the idea of being related to nobles.

Well, Iris didn’t mean any harm when she said that though.

“This is the natural face pack Toto developed, it can be used to repair all skin problems.”

We then went on to describe the plant and its uses.

“Amazing! I had no idea such a thing existed.”

“I don’t think you’ll need it though Iris, your skin’s already beautiful enough as it is.”

“Even if you say that, I’d still want it. Girls are always looking for ways to make themselves more beautiful you know?”

I still don’t think you need it though, and the excitement your showing now is different than the sparkle you had while we were talking about the Silver vine, but it’s fine I guess.

Really though, she’s always so cheerful, homely, and caring, I can’t help but think that Iris will become a great wife someday, I can feel it.

TN: Silver vine is a herb that has a euphoric effect on cats. So its basically Cat-nip. Neko-sensei is making Toto grow drugs for her so she can get high.

| ToC |

Chapter 11

“You really are amazing Kururi.”

Every single time I go to Medical Science, a man with a creepy smile on his face approaches me as if it’s the most natural thing to do.

With eight square tables equally spaced out, holding four people each, you’d think we’d all have enough personal space right? Wrong! For some reason this guy always comes over here and brings me trouble. *Especially* whenever the instructor says we’re going to have a joint project, I have to be extra cautious then.

“Hey, have you heard about the rumour that’s been going around lately?”

Towards the gloomy stalker-like guy who just asked me something, I answered coldly.

“I heard. The ones where I was apparently tamed by the prince, right? To my understanding though, I thought we weren’t very compatible in the first place.”

As if he didn’t even notice my tone, Rail’s smile was in full bloom. Though whether or not that was an actual smile or just his pokerface, I didn’t really know.

“If I were to give a name to our relationship I guess it would be… training partners? We’re better than we were before,

but the prince didn’t ‘tame’ me. It’s more like he just one-sidedly got me to help him.”

“Just recently I was called over by Neko-sensei too. Hopefully, I’ll get to have a special lesson after as well, just the two of us Kururi-kun.”

He approached by another step without changing his line of sight. He was so close he was almost snuggling with me.

I could feel chills running up my spine. I swear if he gets any closer I’m going to kick his ass, though I get the feeling he’d just go “Kya~!” in response, and come back.

Well, what else am I supposed to do?! He’s so creepy!

“Hey, umm… can you give me a little space?”

“Sure,” he replied with his usual smile.

Today’s challenge is supposed to be done individually.

Following the procedures, there seems to be some parts that I’ll need the instructor’s advice to complete, but luckily, it looks like most of it can be done by following the reference book.

I want to finish my work quickly, but do to a certain *someone* I can’t get into the mood to focus.

Pachinpachin (Sfx: smack smack) I hit my face a few times to help myself concentrate.

Okay, let’s do this!

“Kururi-kun, how’s that thing you said you’d make me before going?”

…he must have been aiming for this moment to bring this up.

Yet somehow he’s able to talk without stopping his work. That’s a little, no, that’s quite unpleasant.

“You mean the production of your medical equipment?”

“That’s right, though I can’t help but feel a little bad knowing that I stole a march on Prince Arc.”

Does he think he’s my girlfriend of something? No, that can’t be since he’s his boyfriend.

“I’ll bring it to you soon.”

“Thanks, I wouldn’t have gone if you hadn’t said so.” Rail shook his head while muttering something I couldn’t hear.

Come to think of it, the people who always go to my room always enter for their own selfish reasons. To think I almost forgot the spirit in actually inviting someone over, because there’s always two people hanging out there.

Though, that was probably my fault.

It’s true, Rail is creepy, but he does have a lot of common sense. It’d be even worse if he just came over when I hadn’t even invited him.

“Well if you are coming over, right after school when the lessons are over is no good. Same with the evening ‘cause I have some errands to attend to.”

“Then at night? You want me to visit you in the middle of the night?”

What are you, my girlfriend?!

Noticing my glare, Rail immediately went to apologize saying “I’m sorry.”

I guess it’s because he’s always smiling, but it’s hard to tell what he’s really thinking… I hope he was just joking though.

The worst-case scenario would be if he came while Vaine and Crossy were away, though in such a situation I would definitely run.

For the first person I actually invite to be such a creepy guy. It goes without saying that I hate this!

Turning away from the eyes that reminded me of a reptile’s, I decided to concentrate on the lesson.

Today we’re focusing on anatomy. ‘Just cut it and take it out already’ seems to be the instructor’s motto. It’s better to just

get used to it now or fail it if you can’t, rather than make a mistake and have someone kick the bucket later on, I guess.

I took the medical equipment (which I still haven’t gotten quite used to by the way), in hand and started to work. Although learning the anatomy of various organisms may help me in the future, it’s quite tiring work on the both the physical and mental level.

By the way, Rail is currently in a state where he’s struggling to maintain his usual smile.

Good luck, you’ll need it.

“Now let’s go.”

“This is really okay?”

“It’s fine, let’s just get this over with already.”

After school I half-forced Rail to enter my room.

The man himself kept on saying stupid things like ‘this’ and ‘that’ so I had to be pushy.

I doesn’t really matter though, I’ll forget about any ill intent on this level eventually.

“This is?”

Once we were inside, the hot air and the hustle and bustle that was usually here, wasn’t there.

There were some lingering signs of it, but the room was empty.

… hey, you’re not doing your training here today?

Apparently, today’s special training is being held outside.

My last ray of hope that could protect me has disappeared.

Turning around, there I saw Rail’s face which of course, was still smiling.

* * *

“Today as well, thank you for growing those flowers. Though my heart aches during the lessons, whenever I look at the flowers I can feel myself relax. The last time I went to water them this morning, I think I fell in love with them.”

“I see, I’ll take those words as a compliment then.”

The flowers that bloomed due my magic seem to have vigorously grown thereafter (according to Rail). They’re the same as normal flowers after all, all they need is sunlight, some water, and rich soil to grow up healthy.

Though flowers grown with magic seem to have a strange charm to them.

They look just as good as normal flowers, and they even smell nice too.

Really, I wonder what is the difference between natural flowers and magically grown ones?

Since they’re planted in a place that people don’t really go that much, it must be a pain to care for someone to take care of them.

“Then, please excuse me as I take a shower.”

Rail put down his baggage as he said so, and entered into the room’s bathroom.

While he’s in the shower this is my ‘Now or Never’ moment to run away…

Well, I guess I can always use the window if I’m desperate enough.

Lighting the fire in the smithy like usual, I prepared my materials and tools.

Just as I was finishing my preparations and was about to start working, Rail entered into my workplace.

It looks like he worked up a good sweat in the shower.

Water is still dripping from him here and there.

“Fu~, that was refreshing. Were you about to start Kururi-kun?”

“Yeah.”

The first thing I’m going to make will be one of the basic tools, the medical knife.

“It’s a given that the blade has to be sharp, but it’s hard to use if it’s straight, it would only tear the material it cuts like that.”

I have to agree with Rail’s opinion there. It’d be too jittery to make that way.

Therefore, I proposed that we make the blade slightly curved instead.

Rail agreed, and we immediately got to work.

The size of the equipment is far smaller than a sword. It’s like making a dagger, but even smaller.

It needs to be one-handed, and small enough that it can be supported with only one finger.

Paying close attention to the work, I struck the iron carefully, little by little.

Lastly, I took the knife and placed it against a machine to fine it down until the blade had a sharp polish to it.

In the end, the completed medical knife gave off a nice shine and reflection, a great success.

“That’s amazing Kururi-kun! The difference between this one and the knife given out for lessons is like heaven and earth! How should I put this… it gives off a powerful feeling? Like you can really feel the craftsman’s soul in it!”

Once the work was all finished, Rail let out all the excitement he was holding in through his words.

“Your welcome. As repayment, it’d make me really happy if you didn’t meddle with me in class.”

“Sorry, but I can’t do that. Its way too fun teasing you.”

It’s fun you say?! Well I don’t care so stop it!!

I passed the finished knife to Rail.

He took it in hand and gave it a look-over.

An uncommon, serious-look that he doesn’t show very often.

“Yeah, even without having to test its sharpness, there’s no doubt that this is state-of-the-art medical equipment. It’s a great piece! I want to try this out as soon as possible.”

“There’s still a lot of hard work that needs to be done though, that was only one piece. Now I need to make the rest of the equipment.”

“Oh, I’ll leave it to you then, but really Kururi-kun your arms must be blessed. I can’t help but hold my expectations high.”

After which I repeated a process of trial and error before being satisfied with the results.

Finally, by the time I had created two more pieces of equipment, it was already past midnight.

Plopped on the floor were the bodies of two tired people, both of which were drenched in sweat.

“Fu~, is that it?”

“Yeah, that sounds about right.”

I answered Rail’s question with a smile, and in response a look of satisfaction could be seen growing on his face. I wonder if I have the same look right now, I think I do.

On the floor the polished medical tools were arranged in a clear manner. Looking at it sideways, I felt a little proud of myself.

“This is the best. Just by being acquainted with you I can feel good things well up inside me, Kururi-kun.”

“I completely disagree.”

“No, I mean it. It feels like I’m getting closer to my dream of being a doctor day-by-day because of you, and it’s not just me you’ve affected. Arc’s recent atmosphere seems to have softened up compared to how he was before, things are unbearably fun now.”

“Arc’s change has nothing to do with me, that’s all thanks to Iris.”

“Oh yeah, I guess that’s true. Come to think of it, do you know Arc’s electives?”

Suddenly, Rail turned towards me with the mischievous smile of a child.

“…Law, Geology, Herbalism, and Biology.”

Those are the same electives as Iris. Rail doesn’t have any reason to lie, and it seems plausible.

“Hey, isn’t this weird? Why would he choose Herbalism, why not Emperor Studies? Do you know what this means?”

It might be because he’s a bit drowsy, but Rail’s tensions seem to be a bit higher than usual, the same with his laugh… it’s different somehow.

“This is amazing, really amazing.”

Rail took the medical knife we first created in hand, and stared at it intently.

I grabbed it as well, inspecting it.

For someone who had only taken smithing a few years ago, this was definitely a good job.

It really makes me think that it was a good thing I didn’t neglect my daily training.

“For something like this, why don’t you engrave your name in it?”

“My name?”

“Yeah, well there’s this one sword I know where the smith engraved his name into its end, leaving his mark in the sword’s history, so why don’t we do it? Let’s engrave your name into these, let’s create the legacy of Kururi Helan!”

“Eh?! No way, that’s way too embarrassing.”

This is so weird. With a strange tension hanging in the air, in the middle of the night, I’m acting all embarrassed? Way too weird.

“Well, it’s probably about time I left. I got what I asked for, but still, I have one more favour to ask of you.”

“Yeah?”

“Engrave your name into your works, that is all I ask, Kururi-kun.”

Huh? As I was asking myself this Rail sent over a wink with his usual flashiness.

…I guess it can’t be helped.

It’s not a big deal, really. Taking some of my tools in hand, I carved the name “Kururi Helan” into the works. Of course, I made sure to be conservative and only did it in the corners.

“That’s good, I’ll make sure to cherish them.”

Rail looked at me with happy eyes that seemed to shine.

Well I made them for you, so I’m happy you enjoy them.

“Even so, I sure am tired. Even though we’re done now, I can’t even jump for joy.”

“Yeah, I’m beat too. I’m going to sleep soon.”

“That sounds good, but I think I need to take another shower first.”

Another shower? Certainly, we did sweat a lot but…

“No, do it in your own room.”

“We stayed up too long so I don’t have the physical strength to go back. I don’t think I’ll be able to make it.”

“There’s only one bed though…”

“I don’t mind.”

“…i-is that so?”

What the hell did I just get myself into?!

| ToC |

Chapter 12

I had some dried fish with me today.

Since I was being personally taught magic by Neko-sensei, I thought it’d be nice if I gave her something.

The dried fish were actually given to me by Vaine.

He apparently caught a large quantity of them in a nearby river, so he was trying to get rid of his extras. When I saw the huge amount that he was giving to me, I was appalled.

He was a bit worried that I would just throw them away, but how could I? They were delicious.

As expected of the ‘fishing season’, all of the dried fish was amazing.

He even smoked them, giving them a distinctive taste. Once I started, I couldn’t stop eating them.

Remembering the fragrance that spread through my mouth, and the crunchiness of their bodies, Vaine had truly created an irresistible food that anyone would want.

What I mean to say is; I thought Neko-sensei would like these so I brought some for her, and with two dried fish in hand, I was standing in front of a classroom.

This was the room Neko-sensei told me to go to, and after knocking once, I walked in.

In the room I looked around for Neko-sensei but she was nowhere to be found.

Instead, there was a beautiful lady sitting in the only chair in the otherwise empty classroom.

With her elbow resting on the armrest, her hand was propped up against her cheek, and even though I had just walked in, she didn’t move the slightest bit in acknowledgement.

Our eyes met.

Although this is only my first impression of her, I can’t help but think, she is really beautiful.

She was so out of place here, but that’s exactly what would draw you in.

Her body was so alluring: her arms were slender and long, her legs were no exception, both showing off her skin, each nothing but perfection at first glance.

Turning away, I couldn’t help but feel embarrassed for some reason.

I could feel my heart beating faster too, but why?

“Welcome.”

The lady’s beautiful voice resounded out in the silent classroom.

The room itself was tinged slightly red by the setting sun, growing slightly dark with time.

Somehow it has an erotic feel to it.

“Ah, yeah. Hello.”

“Oh? Why so respectful? You’re never like this usually.”

“Sorry, for some reason I’m a little nervous.”

“Nufufu (sfx: laugh), well you *are* young afterall.”

The lady put her hands to her lips, her figure accompanied with her soft smile was downright graceful. Yet you could clearly feel the adult sex appeal emanating from her.

I could feel my heart throb.

It was the first time I’ve ever met someone like her.

This is exactly what a man would call the ‘charm of a mature woman’.

“Hmm? What do you have there in your hand?”

To the lady’s question, I quickly hid the dried fish I had behind my back.

“Oh, it’s nothing.”

For some reason it was awfully embarrassing to have dried fish right now.

“Well are you going to stand at the entrance forever then? Why don’t you come inside Kururi?”

“Eh?! You know my name?!”

The moment she called my name, my trembling heart felt like it was going to stop.

I felt really happy knowing that someone as beautiful as her knew me.

“Of course I do. Don’t you recognise me?”

“I’m sorry, I would never forget someone as beautiful as you, but I can’t say I do.”

“Nufufu, how terrible. To not remember me, I’ll have to punish you later.”

“Please don’t tease me. So who are you really?”

In response to my question, the lady tilted her head. After swinging it a bit in thought, she nodded and said:

“Hmm, you really don’t know who I am?”

“No, I really don’t.”

I’ve been trying to remember with every ounce of my being, but I just couldn’t.

It’d be impossible for me to forget a beauty like this! There’s no way!

“Really? This is unexpected, you really don’t know… Whew nyaa, there we go nyaa.”

“…”

After casting a spell, the giant hairball we call Neko-sensei showed up with a *Bon* (sfx: poof)

Without even looking in a mirror I could see myself. My face showing signs of joy, sadness, anger, etc. My mind had gone blank, while my heart which was throbbing moments ago had just died.

I will not think. I will not have thoughts. There is nothing. The world’s peace would be disrupted if I did so.

I could only grasp at those happy memories which were now flying away.

The door suddenly opened with a rattle.

“I’m here, stray. …and why does he have the face of a dead man?”

Although it seems like Arc said something behind me, it went in one ear and out the other.

“Well, today I’ll just be showing you more of my magic research nyaa. Arc-chan, Kururi-chan already witnessed my magic transformation today nyaa, but I don’t think I’ll be able to do it again because I’m tired meow.”

“You, just what did you see?”

“…nothing, nothing at all.”

Really.

“Now let’s resume our work from where we left off nyaa. Nyah need to work hard since you could only transform your hand before nyaa, and it only gets harder from here on out nyaa. Every year some students give up after transforming their hand because of the difficulty increase nyaa.”

“…understood.”

I was somehow able to muster up the energy to reply.

Arc immediately started practicing, but it looks like he going to struggle again like he did before.

Fu~ I decided it would be best to start practicing after I sat down and calmed my mind.

I became considerably fatigued from what had just happened, I’m not sure if I’ll make any progress today.

“Before I forget, here, I brought these for you.”

I handed the dried fish over to Neko-sensei.

“Dried fish nyaa? I don’t hate them but… I can’t say they’re my favorite.”

…yeah, my bad. I’m sorry for bringing you cat treats.

After Neko-sensei received it, she started to nap in a corner of the classroom that was bathed in the sunset.

Well, I guess I should start practice.

To start, I’ll just repeat the steps I could accomplish last time. First, to recap I tried to transform my hand into a paw just like Neko-sensei. By now I could do it without difficulty since I’ve already done it many times before. My fear that I couldn’t do it any more after that shock had disappeared, and I was able to relax a little.

“Nyanyanya?! This is amazing nyaa! Its delicious nyaa!!”

Turning towards the excited voice, it was Neko-sensei who decided to start eating the dried fish as she napped.

“Kururi-chan, did you make this nyaa?”

“Unfortunately no, I recieved them from Vaine. He both caught them, and cooked them.”

“Wow, Vaine-chan made these nyaa? That’s unexpected nyaa.”

Okay, I clapped my hands against my face to concentrate on the transformation. Neko-sensei also said that the difficulty goes up from here on out too, so I need to focus.

“He was able to catch them even though they dart about like that nyaa? Vaine-chan just accomplished a feat greater than magic nyaa.”

I desperately tried to transform, although I was certainly wearing the magical power, to actually change my whole body at once was far harder than just my hand. The moment you try to change one part of your body, the spell expires everywhere else and changes you back to normal.

“It’s so good nyaa! I can’t stop nyaa, it’s so delicious nyaa! It smells wonderful nyaa, and the aftertaste is perfect nyaa!”

I could feel it work, but at the same time I couldn’t. Although it’s hard, I had the self-confidence I could do it by the end of the day.

“Nyanyanya, it’s too good nyaa! I need more nyaa! I can’t live without it nyaa!”

Would you shut up already?!!

I shouldn’t have brought the dried fish, I’m not pleased with this result.

Arc doesn’t seem to be in a good mood either, or is it just me?

No, no… I should be concentrating right now.

With all my strength I exhaled, and operated the magic to the image in my head.

At that moment, both my left and right-hands transformed into paws at the same time.

Huh?! Isn’t this actually a great result?!

“Neko-sensei…”

“Another success nyaa? That’s amazing nyaa. Kururi-chan, you really are a genius nyaa.”

It was a success, but it was still really difficult. I wonder how many more times I’ll need to practice before I can even do *this* normally.

“Next, you should try to grow a tail nyaa. It’ll be easier to focus on the outside first before slowly transforming the rest of the body.”

“Okay, I’ll try.”

Now I imagined growing a tail like Neko-sensei.

I collected magic around my butt, and tried to keep the magical power around my hands sustained as I did so.

Supo! (sfx: Pop!), with that a cat tail neatly popped into existence.

“That’s amazing nyaa, really amazing nyaa! Meow, you should just keep transforming your body steadily.”

First it was my foot, then my shoulders, then my legs to my thigh, and then my elbows.

My body’s transformation was gradually proceeding as well.

Finally, I was able to successfully transform my head.

It went so well I even scared myself a bit.

Why was I so successful? I can’t even explain it.

“Neko-sensei, I did it nyaa!!” Wait… nyaa?!

“That’s amazing nyaa. This is the first time I’ve seen someone actually complete it besides myself nyaa, and to

learn it so quickly too nyaa.”

“Thanks for everything nyaa!”

Huh?! The endings of my sentences are…

“Sensei, something’s wrong with how I speak nyaa.”

“There’s nothing wrong nyaa. That’s normal nyaa.”

“…so that’s how it is nyaa.”

Somehow, my mood seems to have sunk quite a bit.

“Meow try to compress the magic nyaa.”

“Compression nyaa? I’ll give it a shot nyaa.”

I tried to compress it as I was told.

My body instantly started to shrink.

Just as my body shrunk to about half its size, I stopped after hesitating a little.

“You can be even smaller if you want to nyaa. So what do you think nyaa? Isn’t it amazing nyaa?”

“It’s amazing nyaa!”

After I replied with a excited voice, my magic power seems to have fluctuated a bit, and I returned to my usual appearance as a human being. “Ah.”

Though I was a little relieved to be back to normal, in both form and size.

“Meow you just need to practice on maintaining it. For meow try aiming for one to two hours.”

“Yes!”

This is great, I was able to do it in the end.

Though it seems the prince still hasn’t been able to do it yet.

Of course, I was caught immediately after and pressed for the trick to do it, but I just replied it was a secret since I didn’t really know.

Neko-sensei eventually lost interest in my success, and I was now giving tips to Arc as we walked back to the dorms.

We continued practicing until evening, but in the end he was only able to transform his hands.

“That’s not bad nyaa. Close, but not quite nyaa. You keep making the same mistakes prince, nyaa.” This ‘study group’ we have seems to have become a habit after Neko-sensei’s classes end.

I was a bit worried that the prince was going to come to my room again tonight, but he didn’t in the end. That’s a relief.

Even so, I wonder why I was able to do it so smoothly?

Is it because I got closer with Neko-sensei today?

…oh well, I don’t really want to think about it.

I headed back to my room, and immediately fell asleep.

In the end, I had nightmare that night.

“Uwah!!! The beautiful lady is Neko-sensei, and Neko-sensei is the beautiful lady!!! Uwahhhhhh!!!!”

| ToC |

Chapter 13

Today is a school holiday, as well as my long-awaited vacation day.

I was thinking about doing the challenge given to me by Neko-sensei the other day about transformation magic, but because there’s always two people in my room, I decided it would be best to find a quiet place outside to practice instead.

Following the procedure I did in the classroom, my body gradually took the form of a cat, and after I compressed it as well, my body started to shrink accordingly.

“Oh.”

My line of sight became low, and my body became light.

I had completely turned into a cat.

With all four of my legs, I tried bouncing up and down a few times.

As I thought, its light.

Before I knew it, I was having fun from this simple action.

Nyanyaa~ I walked in rhythm with the song I sang as a cat.

Finally reaching the lawn, I plopped my whole body down for a bit.

Ah, the sun feels great~

Students passing by would glance at me from time to time, but they didn't do anything in particular to me, I was only a cat after all.

Finished with my observation, I decided it'd be good to explore the school grounds a bit more.

This really makes me feel like I've become a cat.

Maybe if I find somewhere nice, I'll even have a nap like this.

I wonder how long I'll be able to keep the transformation up?

"Shah!" (sfx: Hiss!)

As I was taking my walk comfortably, my natural enemy had appeared before me!

There was a male cat with a wounded face, sharp eyes, and a large body. He was like a king walking in the middle of the road, there was no doubt he was a veteran of many cat-fights.

More importantly, he was currently directing towards me a large amount of hostility.

I wonder if cats have things like territories as well? I'm not sure on the finer details but I do know that he's *not* in a happy mood.

I guess for now I'll just say 'hello', "Nyaa."

"Shah!"

"Nyaa?" Translation: Is there something wrong with your stomach?

"Shah!"

"Nyaa?" Translation: How's it going? Are you having a good day?

"Shah!"

This is useless, I think his mood is even worse than before.

I guess it can't be helped, I tried to converse with him, but he's not cooperating.

I slowly began to approach him.

Understanding my intentions, he readied himself for a fight.

Before that could happen though, I released a bit of my magic compression and made myself bigger.

“Nyaa?!”

The other cat raised his voice in surprise.

When your opponent suddenly becomes double your size you have second thoughts about picking a fight with them.

He immediately decided to flee and disappeared, though I do feel a little bad about that.

I don’t even have to say the results.

Score one win for Kururi Helan.

Returning my body back to a normal cat, I resumed my walk.

Oh, there was grasshopper bouncing in front of my eyes.

Hmm? I wasn’t supposed to be doing anything right now, but before I knew it I was chasing it like my life depended on it… why?

Whatever, right now all I know is that I want to catch it!

I want to catch it right in between my paws!

The grasshopper landed, and I pounced, to sandwich it right between my paws mid-jump… but it got away. I bet this was a special grasshopper that could jump faster than any other!

I jumped! Miss. I repeat! Miss. This cycle happened a couple of times but I couldn’t catch it.

…?! I caught it in my mouth!

Paku (sfx: bite) Yup, I caught it well.

I did it!

…ueeeeee. I finally realized I had a grasshopper *inside my mouth…* I spat it out immediately.

Ugh, I can still taste it a bit. I-it couldn’t be helped okay?! I had no control over myself!

My mind had truly turned into that of a cat. This is dangerous, really dangerous.

From now on, I need to be careful whenever I use this spell.

After re-confirming I was myself, I returned to exploring the school.

The roads that I’ve passed through so many times look completely different as a cat.

It really gives a fresh feeling, everything is new and tickles my curiosity.

Neko-sensei’s magic sure is useful.

As I walked *tokotoko* (sfx: step step), I found a couple flirting together early in the morning.

I recognise both their faces, and the place that they’ve met seems to be a place that’s hidden from sight.

Wow, I just saw something interesting.

The other side wasn’t vigilant of me at all, it must be because I’m a cat.

So I can even use it for things like this, I feel that this also has a lot of bad uses to it as well.

Maybe it was because everything was so new in this form, or because I’ve been like this for a while, but I was feeling a little drowsy.

I was suddenly in the mood to find a place where I could nap.

Thinking about such things, I made my way over to a corner of the school building.

Wait, that’s?

There was a familiar face there.

It was Iris, reading a book alone by a flowerbed.

Spending your holiday reading, you sure are serious.

Though, I don’t really think she’s doing this because she wants too.

Iris is a special presence in the school, but that makes her an easy target for bullying.

Because of her relationship with the prince, along with her grades and school performance, she’s not only made an enemy of Eliza, but many other students as well.

Even I’ve recently heard the rumours of her being harassed.

There are even stories being told by the seniors to help spread contempt against commoners in general.

To see her in such a state, where she doesn’t even have any girls as friends… I don’t like it.

I can only imagine how bad it is at the dormitory.

I’ve never confirmed these rumours myself, but they’re likely to be true.

Maybe it’s because she’s always so cheerful when she’s with me that I never noticed.

Just looking at her, in comparison with the her that’s always so happy, and that figure spending her holiday all alone, how could I just let this be?

After moving to location out of her sight, I canceled the spell.

Just in case I double checked my hands to see if there was any trace of ‘paw’ left.

“Hmm? What coincidence seeing you here Iris.” walking over to the place Iris sat, I called out to her.

By chance, as she looked up a soft gust of wind blew by, making her hair sway.

“Kururi? What are you doing here?”

“I saw a serious student reading a book by herself in a corner of the school building, and thought I should say ‘Hi’.”

“I can settle down here, I can’t really concentrate when there’s a lot of people around… but I’m still happy you came.”

That’s the bright Iris that I know.

“Iris, you’re always so bright and energetic, but that’s no excuse for me to have been so insensitive to what you’ve been through… umm, what I mean to say is, if you ever have any troubles, I’m here for you.”

“What’s with this so suddenly?”

Iris started to laugh a bit.

“Well, I’m your friend right? Let me know the next time you need to vent, and I’ll be there to listen.”

“Thats… thanks. I’m honoured to have someone like you by my side oh great aristocrat Kururi-dono.”

Haha, Iris exaggeratedly bowed to me.

I guess if she can still tell jokes like that, it probably hasn’t gone too far yet. That’s a relief.

“Be it harassment or anything of the sort, make sure to tell me.”

“Don’t worry so much, I’m a strong girl.” Iris laughed with a smile.

Everything doesn’t seem okay though, why would she be here if she was?

I think I just got a glimpse of the true feelings that she always hides behind that smile.

“Fu~, well that’s the end of my worries, but Iris, seriously, you’re the very definition of a maiden that a hero of justice

would risk his life to save.”

“Really? Fu~, does that mean you want to be my hero Kururi?”

“Of course I do, I want to be everyone’s hero!”

I flashed a smile towards her.

As the two of us continued our talk, the topic slowly changed directions towards my room.

“From morning to night, both Vaine and Crossy, they always just enter my room without permission, so it wouldn’t be a big deal if you came from time to time Iris.”

“I couldn’t possibly do that.” was her reply.

That’s what I expected, I mean it’s common sense right? Those two are the odd ones here.

Talking with Iris was a nice refresher, so after we finished I decided to continue my cat-walk.

While invoking my magic, for some reason I found that my body was lighter than it was before.

Maybe it was because that conversation was so relaxing, that my magic stabilized a bit.

Nyanyan, I advanced forward with my paws, and finally I found the perfect sunny area.

The sun wasn’t too strong to make it hot, so it was comfortable location with flowers blooming everywhere.

The wind was blowing softly too.

It’s the perfect place to sleep.

Lying down, all the power in my body just seemed to flow out of me.

Ah~ This feels great~ I never get a chance to relax normally.

Closing my eyes, I wondered whether I’ve ever felt so relaxed before.

It’s no fair, why couldn’t I have learned this sooner in my life?

This is the best, I don’t even need a blanket to keep my warm because of my fur.

And before I even noticed, I had fallen asleep.

* * *

…up.

…wake up.

“It’s time to wake up, Neko-san.”

There’s someone calling me. As I thought that my hazy consciousness slowly returned to me.

My eyes were still closed though, so I didn’t know who it was.

I think they were scratching my chin though.

Oh, please continue. It feels great~

Ah, right there!

The person who was scratching me seemed to be quite used to cats.

They know just the right spots to scratch.

Ahh~ This is perfect~

“Nyan, nyan, nyanya~”

My voice unintentionally slipped out. Somehow I’m getting sleepy again, I guess I haven’t been getting enough sleep lately, and that fatigue sure does accumulate.

“Nya~, are you going to sleep again, nya~? I’ll wake you up later then.”

This time they seem to be massaging my paws.
Munyumunyu (sfx: soft and squishy)

I’ve already said this many times, but this feels great~

Even so, that voice sure does sound familiar… where have I heard it before?

Someone does come to mind, but there’s no way, the contrast is too great. It’s probably someone with a similar voice.

For a while I just slept as they gave me a massage, but I think I’m good now. Opening my eyes, I looked up at the person as my vision cleared.

…?! Gyaaa!!

If I could express my feelings in one word right now, it would be ‘scared’.

It was all-my-hair-is-standing-on-its-end level scared. I could barely even squeeze my voice out in shock.

“Are you done now? You surprised me there for a second, really.”

The girl who was going ‘nya’ at the ends of her sentences on purpose was… Eliza.

She’s never showed me a friendly face before, and now she was rubbing my chin while I’m a cat.

“Hehe, don’t you like this? If you lie down, I’ll scratch you more.”

That’s… w-well, if you insist.

Once I lied down, she continued to stroke me.

Anyways, I had no idea Eliza had this cute side to her.

I better keep this secret to my grave. It was something I felt I had to d- oh, right there!

“Neko-san, neko-san. You sure are free, aren’t you Neko-san?”

I wonder what brought this up? Oh well, she’ll likely explain it in a bit.

Please continue.

“Sometimes I feel just like a bird in a cage, I want to live free just like you do.”

…hmm, I think I just heard something I shouldn’t have heard right now.

Though I *am* her future husband, so it’s okay, right?

“I don’t have any friends here, so will you be my friend?”

…I replied with a ‘nya’.

“Oh, really? What a good boy.”

All I did was meow and she started petting me. Ah, right next to the ear! Yes! Right there!

Eliza said she didn’t have any friends, but what about the Four Heavenly Kings? Aren’t they her friends? I must definitely take this info to my grave, for the greater good I absolutely must.

…I think it’s about time I run away now.

I’m not sure how long I slept, but if I’m not careful the magic might dissolve on its own.

Kicking myself out of Eliza’s hands, I started walking away with a *Tata* (sfx: light steps)

“Hey, wait!”

As she said so, I was lifted up by her.

Embracing me into her chest, she started looking into my eyes.

“Just a little more please? Did you not like it? No?”

This is bad, I’m getting excited here.

…really bad. My magic is about to dissolve on me.

I tried struggling out of her arms, but it was useless, she wouldn’t let go.

I must endure this, if I return to normal now only certain death awaits me.

Bear with it! Kururi Helan!!

“Hehe, you are a boy after all, I guess you would be a little embarrassed. Here, take this!”

Oh, it was no good after all.

The moment she decided to tickle me, the spell finally cancelled. Why now of all times?!

My magic was canceled with a *Bon*, and I appeared in front of Eliza’s eyes.

“Umm… hey, how’s your day going?” I tried to give a refreshing greeting to her. Please work.

“…”

After that I was ruthlessly chased by Eliza.

If she was holding a sickle, I would’ve sworn it was actually the grim reaper chasing me, ‘cause if I was grabbed I was sure to die. My neck would’ve been chopped off without any hesitation.

This was the day that Kururi Helan had run from death the most in his entire life, leaving a memory that he would never forget.

| ToC |

Chapter 14

After going into hiding for a bit and making sure the coast was clear, I headed back to my room.

I somehow lost her by escaping into a large crowd of people. Eliza wouldn’t want to risk her image by showing herself chasing me. Geez, that was way too close.

As for right now, I am currently waking up for the morning of the next day, safely alive.

Considering the fact that Eliza didn’t raid my room in fury, must’ve meant that her anger has cooled down considerably from before.

I don’t think she’s forgiven me though. With what happened yesterday, along with that event with Mary, my relationship with Eliza can only be considered the worst.

I want to change this, but it’s probably better if I avoid her for now. Right now, she’d burn me alive with her gaze if she could.

As I thought that, suddenly something came from under the room’s door, it was a letter.

It was a lovely envelope, signed with the beautiful yet terrifying name ‘Eliza Deauville’.

The moment I saw the name, goosebumps suddenly sprouted out all over me in horror.

‘You can’t run, I will find you.’

That one sentence on the letter have just announced my death, even if it was only written…

No, if she decides she wants to settle this through letters, isn’t this much better than in person?

Reinforcing my resolve, I gingerly opened the envelope and took out the stationary.

Huh, the stationary was rather pretty actually.

M-maybe the contents of it won’t be so bad.

Well, whether it be demons or snakes that come out, I am a man with the heart of a lion! I won’t be fazed by this!

Dear Kururi Helan-dono,

I hope this letter had found you well. Did you know? The weather had become so hot yesterday that my physical condition almost broke down? I’m sure that you’re fine though, there’s no way you would break down from something like that, right?

I didn’t get much sleep last night, I was too busy thinking of what you did to get any.

I closed the letter there, and gently placed it on the table.

For some reason I was thirsty all of a sudden, the atmosphere had made me quite nervous.

After drinking a cup of tea, I re-read that section with deep breath.

…Yup, it didn’t change. I wonder why she wrote the letter that way?

‘She didn’t get any sleep yesterday? How amusing~’ is what you’re thinking right? Well it’s not amusing for me!

Kururi Helan-dono, are you aware of who my father is? My father is the proud Prime Minister of this country, and he loves me ***very*** *much. He has happily eliminated anything I didn’t like ever since I was small.*

I once again closed the letter.

The letter had suddenly become much darker and her handwriting seems to have gotten rougher as well.

Brandishing my courage, I was somehow able to continue reading.

This time a very sad event had happened between us.

I believe that it would be in our best interests if we keep what happened a secret, ***right?***

So let's forget that this ever happened, this is the best choice.

My honour is protected, and you get to keep your life. We both win.

I think you understand. No, I ***know*** *you understand.*

So thank you for your understanding.

Please take care of yourself, we wouldn't want anything bad to happen now, would we?

– Eliza Deauville

Somehow I was feeling intimidated by a letter, or rather, its contents.

In short, if I talk, I die. I wonder why she bothered to do this through letter though? Well, I'm thankful she didn't decide to kill me out-right unconditionally though.

Well, even if it was a threat, she did take the time to write me a letter.

It's only natural for a gentlemen to write one back.

Removing a pen from my desk's drawer, I quickly got to work on a new paper.

Dear Eliza Deauville-sama,

I hope you are doing well, it worried me knowing you almost collapsed.

You don't need to worry about me by the way, a little bit of extra heat won't affect me, my body is quite used to it already.

Actually, I couldn't get any sleep yesterday either, isn't that a funny coincidence?

Also, there's no way I wouldn't have known who your father is.

He's a great man with lots of influence with the country's politics, we all live in gratitude to him everyday as nobles.

For such a busy person to actually make enough time to dote on his daughter is quite a nice surprise.

Oh, and by the way, I understand that you're quite mad about something, but I can't say I remember what I did.

In particular, I can't seem to recall yesterday's events at all.

Even if I wanted to spread the contents of what happened, I wouldn't be able to.

You don't need to worry about anything, so you can rest easy now.

If this is a lie, I swear to never have a good night's sleep again, I swear it.

So again, don’t worry.

Not getting enough sleep would impair your beauty, so take care of yourself, okay?

– Kururi Helan

There we go, one letter.

While writing it, I carefully thought about what I should and shouldn’t say to appeal to her, and now I’m done.

Dashing out of the room, I headed straight over to the girl’s dormitory.

Once I was in front of her room, I placed the letter in the post box attached to her door.

‘Kyaa~! I was actually able to deliver it!’ Is what I thought as I ran off, my face completely flushed red.

Yeah, no. Sorry, but there’s no development like that happening right now.

Instead of a love letter, it’s more like a delivery that I had dropped off and ran away from the next second.

This should settle things for a while.

Our conflict still isn’t resolved, but this should be fine.

Right now, we’re at peace. It shouldn’t be too unreasonable to think that way for now.

I returned to my room and prepared a cup of tea.

It’s a special tea exclusively brought from home, it gives off an exceptional fragrance when brewed.

With this I can finally relax.

…or not. As soon as I thought that, the sound of something being dropped off in my post box rang out, completely ruining my happy mood.

After checking out what was inside, it turned out to be another letter from Eliza.

Dear Kururi Helan-dono

I have confirmed the contents of your letter. So you claim to have no recollection of what happened yesterday hmm?

You truly are the son of a backwater noble, it’s only expected that your memory matches your lineage, poor.

Calm down Kururi, calm down… just drink some tea…

…WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

Throwing formalities out the window, your letter suddenly changed into you throwing insults at me!

Somehow, I was able to suppress my anger enough to continue reading.

Well, even if you do somehow remember, that doesn't necessarily mean you're going to just start telling everyone.

Though I'm no fool who'll just believe anything they're told. Especially from a man who doesn't take anything seriously like you.

If you really are serious, why don't you prove what you said?

Currently I'm in the middle of enjoying my tea for the afternoon, finish writing a response by the the time I'm done.

– Eliza Deauville

True, I guess you would want evidence to confirm that I could be trusted.

Hmm, what should I do? What can I do to show that I'll keep the secret?

Or… should I give her something as collateral instead?

Huh? it looks like the letter still goes on.

P.S.

The way you tried to describe my beauty was weak, is that really how feel about me?

Well, I don’t really care about how a non-serious man like you sees me anyway.

It was stupid trying to confirm this. This was only the icing on the cake, please excuse me.

...wow. Writing down my intentions in response actually worked wonders!

I wasn’t wrong about this, the cost-effective ratio is too good!

C-could Eliza actually be a naive maiden?!

Well, here I go.

Taking out my pen, I immediately started on my reply.

Dear Eliza Deauville-sama,

I read your letter, funny enough I was also drinking tea when I received it. My territory is actually famous for it, you

would be pretty surprised what a ‘backwater’ noble can make if they try.

Eliza-sama, I must say your words have impressed me, and I will respond in kind.

Unfortunately due to my lack of wisdom, this was the best I could come up with to prove myself.

I will now disclose one of my secrets with you. Although I don’t think this will hold any demerits for you, if this isn’t enough I would like to apologise in advance.

Did you know? A few years ago I was actually fat and plump, almost to the point where I couldn’t see all of myself when standing in front of a mirror. It is one of my greatest shames that I have never told anyone before. Please keep this a secret.

Also, because I was in the middle of enjoying my tea, can you please be bit more considerate with the timing of your letters? I would appreciate it a lot.

– Kururi Helan

P.S.

You are most delicate and beautiful girl I know, and of course, these are my true feelings here.

To give an example of what I see in these words, I have created a flower with magic in the image of you.

Look at the flower, and you will believe that I’m serious about this.

Finishing off the letter, I placed it in an envelope.

Then I gathered magic power in my hand, and invoked the spell for material creation.

If Eliza was a flower, the center of it would be a bright yellow, with thin, azure-coloured petals that form a larger ellipse when overlapped.

The stem would be the same colour as the petals, and it would be slim with two small green leaves growing a distance away from the flower.

Placing it together with letter, I delivered it to the post box of Eliza’s room.

Well, hopefully she forgives me with this, but if she asks for anything else, I’ll still try to do it.

While waiting for another reply, I brewed another batch of tea since the other one had cooled down.

Before I could drink it though, the sound of the post box rang out. That was a pretty fast reply.

Dear Kururi Helan-dono,

Thank you for the flower.

Is there a name for this flower?

Did you really create this with magic in the image of me? Its very beautiful.

A unique flower like none other in the world. A flower that represents me. If there is a name for it, could you tell me?

– Eliza Deauville

P.S.

Your secret is safe with me.

The post-script and the main issue have swapped places!

Giving the flower as a gift was perfect!

Should this be interpreted as her forgiving me for yesterday?

No, no… I shouldn’t assume things, too dangerous.

I mean, this morning she was practically sending me death threats, but now she’s sending me letters like we’re pen-pals.

What’s with the change? To write letters with such clear feelings instilled in each one.

I immediately started on my reply.

Dear Eliza Deauville-sama,

It would be my pleasure to tell you.

The flower’s name is ‘Envy’, its shape was created in the form of a loop from my imagination.

By the way, in the language of flowers it means “A moment of pale happiness”.

It would make me so happy if you cherished it.

– Kururi Helan

P.S.

I understand.

Lets just leave this as water under the bridge.

Also, I look forward to seeing you in class.

This is a big reversal from that rainy day I initially thought of.

I have passed this trial!

| ToC |

Chapter 15

“Hmm…” last night I was able to sleep really well, I was able to wake up easily too.

I raised both my hands to let my blood circulate while stretching. Yeah this was a good morning that left a pleasant taste in my mouth.

Turning to the window the sky was cloudless, a perfect sunny day. My room easily catches the sunset, so of course it would get the full effects of a sunny day. For this warm awakening I must also say thanks.

With how my morning was going, I decided to enjoy the sun a little more before heading off to class.

I guess I was still a bit sleepy because my body was a bit stiff. Well, it’s nothing a little stretch won’t fix.

After I finished dressing myself, I took my time to enjoy my morning tea. For some reason it was even more delicious than usual today.

Today will be a good day. I couldn’t help but feel that way this morning.

While I was thinking about such things, I heard a happy sound come from my stomach.

Apparently it’s time for breakfast, but I don’t really feel like cafeteria food…

I guess I’ll just make something then, but not even a minute after I entered the kitchen, a knock resounded at the door.

Vaine’s the only one up this early, but whenever he knocks he does it gently, not like the sound I just heard.

With a little anxiety in my heart, I opened the door.

“I’m here nyaa~”

“I didn’t invite you” and with that said I closed the door.

“No! Wait nyaa!” before I could close it something had blocked me at the end.

When I looked down, I noticed that Neko-sensei’s foot was sandwiched in the opening.

For her to immediately come up with a countermeasure like that, I guess she’s familiar with situations like this.

But why would she… no, with an appearance like *that* it’s only natural this has happened before..

“Why are you here so early in the morning?”

“Well I thought it would be my best chance to get in nyaa.”

We had a little pushing contest at the door, but I was getting overpowered. She was determined to get in. Damn it, where is she getting this strength from?!

“How was the transformation magic nyaa? Are you using it nyaa?”

“I have, it’s was very useful during the time I tried it.”

Wait, was it really helpful? I was almost killed because of it…

“I see nyaa. That’s a relief nyaa, there’s actually something I want to talk to you about nyaa.”

For some reason Neko-sensei’s atmosphere seems to have changed, the aura she was giving off was almost visible, going *Karari!* (sfx: Cheerful).

Noticing this I immediately turned to escape, with the door blocked off it’s impossible to just play this off and ditch her. I need to escape!

“I won’t let you run away nyaa!” she hooked my clothes with one of her claws.

She knew what I was thinking!

“The transformation magic I taught you is very special Kururi-chan, nyaa. It’s not a spell that just anyone can learn nyaa. You know nyaa?” those were very condescending words. What is she getting at?

“I do, and I’m grateful for you teaching me that spell.”

“That’s good, because I don’t just teach it for free nyaa. The world of adults isn’t so sweet nyaa.”

“…”

Neko-sensei’s eyes were sharp, they even a little scary. After staring into them for a while, she raised her paw-index finger.

“Meow that Kururi-chan has learned the spell, you can meow return the favour nyaa.”

“…what do you need me to do?”

“I need you to transform into me and teach my class nyaa.”

“There’s no way I could do that!”

“Don’t worry nyaa. It’s only lectures today nyaa. All you need to do is read a book to everyone nyaa. Your tuition is really paying itself off nyaa.”

Like hell that’s fine Neko-sensei!

“Is this really okay?”

“I think it’s alright nyaa. It might be impossible for you to act as elegant as me nyaa, but I think you can do it nyaa.”

Am I really that unrefined?

“I… guess it’s okay? Anyways, what do you need to do that’s so important Neko-sensei?”

“Spring has come nyaa! It’s the best season where it’s not too hot or too cold outside nyaa! It’s the time to do what all living things want to do nyaa!”

I have no idea what you’re talking about.

“No, I mean, what are you actually doing today?”

“Something that children shouldn’t expose themselves too nyaa. You’ll get too horny nyaa.”

“…understood.”

I decided it would be better not to ask. I’m not saying that I don’t have any interest, rather I’m extremely interested right now, but I pushed down that emotion. Its way too dangerous.

“Only this one time.”

“Okay nyaa. Thanks nyaa, I’ll bring you back some souvenirs nyaa.”

“Yeah, yeah~ I’m trembling in anticipation.”

* * *

What was supposed to be a good day has suddenly become a very rough day.

After our talk, everything was just went by in a blur. First of all, I had to get out of class.

I had to participate in a bunch of frauds as to not look suspicious when I was gone.

At one time I even had to go to Vaine's room to tell him "I'm not feeling very good today, so I'm going to take the day off, can you tell the instructor?"

With the chime of the bell, the lesson had started and the students from C-class had started to gather in the classroom.

I was the one standing at the front where the teacher should be, but everyone else just saw Neko-sensei because of the spell.

I don't think anyone's noticed yet so there's no problem.

Now that class had begun everyone was looking at me… This is bad, what am I supposed to say at the beginning of a lesson again?

"Okay~ it's time to start the lesson nyaa."

I tried to speak the same way as Neko-sensei.

The classroom is awfully quiet though… everyone is seriously listening to me right now. I need to calm down, I don't want to get excited and cancel spell now.

“Take your textbooks nyaa. Today we’re going to study about the theory of nature manipulation magic nyaa. For now, just go to that section and do some free reading on your own nyaa.”

After I gave the instructions everyone started opening their textbooks/

This is good, I don’t think anyone’s suspicious of me. Since they’ll be concentrated on their reading, I think I’ll be okay for a bit.

After a while, as I started to think about how strange of a situation I’m in right now. Well, I should at least be able to answer the simple questions they have.

I started to walk around a bit, and I accidentally bumped my thigh against the corner of a student’s desk.

“Ofu”, the desk let out a dull sound, while I let voice slip.

I forgot, since Neko-sensei’s body is so big, it collides with things that I would usually have no problem walking through.

What an unexpected event, though it didn’t hurt that much, I was able to heal myself with magic quick enough.

“Are you alright?”

The girl whose desk I had just bumped into asked me anxiously.

“I’m okay nyaa. Sorry for disturbing you nyaa.”

“What an amazing voice, it almost sounds like a man’s.”

Saying “Excuse me” in response, I was able to run away to safety. However, that was close. Way too close…

Now that I had made that mistake once, I was determined not to do it again.

I was now walking with extra care… but this was bad, I can’t walk like this.

Its way too uncomfortable. It was to the point that I was almost grateful by the time I had made it back to the platform.

It just had to be then when a voice called out “Sensei” at me.

“What is it nyaa?”

“Can you explain this section to me? I don’t understand it.”

I looked at the part that he was pointing at near the fold. Oh, this?

Somehow I was able to give a response since I had already covered this before.

“Oh, so it’s like that huh? That’s easy to understand.”

The students who had just seen that exchange suddenly started to call out to me.

Again, they were all easy questions.

I was able to answer them all quickly.

After running through the barrage of question I felt like collapsing. You would think that for a theoretical class they wouldn’t need so much help, but it looks like it’s different for the C-class. It feels nice to have them rely on me but…

“Excuse me,” a familiar voice suddenly called out to me.

It was Crossy, come to think of it, he did say he was in C-class didn’t he?

“I don’t understand this part very well.”

I looked over the section that he was pointing at. Oh, this?

“You need to know something else before you can understand this interpretation, go back one page first before you read this.”

“Sensei, the way you’re talking right now is…”

“…”

I spoke normally by accident. Maybe it was because I was so familiar with Crossy that I accidentally reverted back to my original way of speaking.

This is bad. I could feel myself sweating in nervousness. What do I do?!

I created a excuse out of desperation “It’s… a charm nyaa.”

“A charm? What kind of charm?”

“Oh!! Look at the time nyaa! Everyone, class is over nyaa!”

Standing over the desk, I pounded my paws against it to get their attention, but it hurt a little.

“For homework nyaa. I want you to review pages 134-241 okay nyaa?”

With everything I had to say said, I ran out of the classroom.

I need to go home quickly, I still haven’t been exposed. Once I get away it’ll be my win!

“Sensei!”

I tried to run away from class as quickly as I could, but it looks like one of the students had followed me.

The owner of the voice was definitely Crossy, so I fearfully looked back.

It’s okay, this hasn’t proven that I’ve been exposed yet.

“Sensei, a bit of your thigh had come off.”

He pointed at my leg, and when I checked, a small part of my thigh had reverted back to that of normal human being.

“…its because of stress nyaa, I’m starting to go bald nyaa.”

“You’re starting to go bald from stress Sensei?!”

“That’s right nyaa. Being a teacher is very hard nyaa.”

“Please do your best, it’ll get better. Here, I’ll give you this special cream I have, it should help somewhat.”

“Thanks nyaa.”

What a gentle child.

Though, it’s not Neko-sensei’s stress that’s been accumulating, she wasn’t even here today.

It was mine.

| ToC |

Chapter 16

Campus life was peaceful for once, and with summer vacation approaching, I received news from Toto that our prototype was completed this morning.

“There have been great changes since the last batch, but the overall effect hasn’t changed. It’s still a natural facepack, and as you requested there is now a scent that’s left behind after use. The fruity fragrance isn’t too strong, and is non-persisting.”

“Really?”

I picked one up with my hand and tried sniffing it. Truly, it did give off a nice fruit scent that was slightly acidic, giving it a somewhat refreshing impression. This is more than what I had expected.

“Has it been tested?”

“Of course it has, the effects have been confirmed. No doubt about it.”

“No, I mean have you used it yourself?”

“No, but-”

“Then let’s use it right now, the two of us.”

“Right now?! I, um… okay.”

“Its decided then, come on, lets do this outside of the greenhouse.”

Outside the plastic building, we carried the product over to a bench big enough for two.

Then respectively, to each his own we took our seats.

Once we were ready, we immediately applied the face packs.

Maybe because he wasn’t used to it, when I looked at Toto I found that he was suffering while squirming on the spot.

I can’t really make fun of him though, I couldn’t help but squirm myself, this is so frustrating to wear!

After a while Toto suddenly became quiet. I guess he fell asleep or something. Lucky.

Guess I should try to get a nap in as well, I can’t take this off for a while now can I?

It was hot outside due to summer, but because the bench was in the shade we didn’t have to worry much.

The wind the occasionally breezed by felt so nice.

With my face covered in the paste from the leaves, I was lying down on the bench.

…what am I doing? Probably something stupid, but I shouldn’t think about it now. I only have one regret, I wish that we did it inside, it’d be less embarrassing.

“Hey Toto, do you think it had any effect?”

I asked Toto who was lying next to me.

“I don’t know.” he responded indifferently.

Honestly my face doesn’t feel any better, only itchier. …wait, is this the effect?! I could feel my anxiety growing in me.

“Hey, Kururi?”

“Yeah?”

“Wouldn’t this have been better if we did this in the greenhouse? How many hours do you think we have to stay like this?”

“…”

This is so awkward, I’ll just pretend I’m asleep.

A few hours had passed, I had actually fallen asleep until noon.

Probably because of the heat, the face pack had become sticky with sweat.

It’s been about three hours since we put them on, but I can’t take this anymore! It’s too hot! I immediately stripped the mask off and stood up.

“Puha!” I could finally breathe normally after so long. The hot air even felt cooler than usual.

“You took it off, Kururi?”

“I couldn’t take it anymore,” looking up, it seems that Toto had taken off his face pack as well.

“…wait.” this is good, even if was just a bit. There’s something here that I need to be more worried about. What are the results?!

“That’s right!”

“-!! Your face is shiny.”

Toto’s face was shining like a marble that had just been polished. This is already a good effect, but we only used it for three hours out of its expected use time.

“Your face as well, here a mirror.” I took the mirror he handed me and checked my reflection, and honestly, I was surprised.

My face was shiny, and when I touched it with my finger, it was a little sticky.

I think I just opened a new door for myself.

“This is amazing! I feel like my skin has been reborn!”

“Sometimes my overwhelming talent scares me.” Toto said proudly.

Well, I’m happy as too, it was a success!

“It also has some shortcomings though.”

“Yeah, its way too hot to wear. To the point where we couldn’t take it anymore, the summer heat sucks, right?”

“Its weaknesses are clear, now we need a cooling effect placed on it.”

“A cooling effect? What’s that?”

“I want it so that you get a cold feeling when it touches the skin, to compensate for the heat.”

“There’s not enough time though, summer vacation is right around the corner.”

“No, this is good. With how it is now, there’s already such a great effect, and its not even complete! Next time when there’s a cooling effect installed as well, we’ll raise the prices even further! What do you think?”

“It’s tempting.”

With the two of us looking at each other, a creepy laughter started to rise up between us.

Yup, we’re both weird in this way.

“You two look like you’re having fun.”

Iris suddenly appeared from out of nowhere, disrupting our laugh.

It looks like she’s come to visit Toto’s greenhouse today.

“Fun, yeah. Really fun.”

“That’s nice.”

“Come to think of it, you were trying to develop vegetables, right Iris? How’s that going for you?”

When I asked this Toto made a proud face again, looks like they’ve had some success.

“It was completed around the same time as the face pack, and because I wanted to show the two of you the fruits of my labour, I invited Iris to come today as well.”

“I’m fine with that.”

“I am as well” Iris responded in her usual smile. The smile that’s still refreshing on a hot summer day.

“As for the results, there have been improvements, like this.”

In Toto’s finger was a seed. It doesn’t look like any seed I’ve seen before though.

“I have the seeds for potatoes, leafy vegetables, root vegetables, grains, and some fruit. When fully grown they should be about ten-times their normal size. I was going to plant some in a vacant plot of land, and observe it until harvest. This is a necessary step needed to see whether it truly is completed or not.”

“That’s amazing!”

Iris’s eyes seemed to sparkle at his description, it looks like she wants to see the end result as soon as possible.

“So which seeds are you going to plant first?”

“I don’t know, the observation step is necessary for all of them. They still aren’t finished products after all.”

“Isn’t it fine, Toto?”

“Not really, if I made a mistake and created a failure, I don’t really know what would happen.”

“That’s why we have Iris here, right?”

“Well, yeah I guess it’ll be okay.”

Toto handed the seeds over to Iris, and the sparkle in her eyes seemed to shine even more so.

“Are you going to send some to your family?”

“Yeah.”

I think it’s good that Iris’s purity hasn’t changed since coming to a school built for the aristocracy. Her familial love and spirit of self-sacrifice are the same as they always have been.

I should really learn from her.

“They collect the mail in the evening, so hopefully the seeds are a success. If we plant them now, we should be able to confirm the results soon.”

“Didn’t you two do most of the work? I’d feel bad if you had to grow these as well, so let me do it.”

“Well, this is for our benefit as well so it’s no big deal really. I’d actually really like working together on this, and honestly, I wanted to try growing one of them myself.”

“Well don’t take from mine then, ask Toto for one.”

The two of us turned to Toto.

He noticed our lines of sight, and started shifting around uncomfortably. He’s probably not accustomed to the attention.

“From now on most of the work on those seeds will be done by you two. Take care of them, these are for my benefit too you know?”

Iris’s cloudless face went “Aha!”

“Then if our labour bears fruit, does that mean we’ll split the profits between the three of us?!”

Her face that was smiling so pleasantly was downright cute. Please by all means, do it again!

“That’s what I’m saying, because I’m not doing any of the manual labour that’s correct.”

This shocking revelation seemed to dawn on Iris and I.

We’re free to use the land as we wish, but none of it has been plowed yet, we have to do it ourselves.

Looking over the land Toto got for us, it was a considerable size.

This is a painful amount of land to plow with only two people.

I didn’t even have the energy to respond to Iris’s energetic “Let’s do this!”

I know we’re supposed to be healthy teenagers but we can’t do this alone…

Well, I guess there’s no choice. I didn’t want to use this, but it would be better than depressing Iris with my words.

“Iris, I have a way to plow the fields quickly, but it’ll be a little weird. Are you okay with that?”

“Of course, if it’s your suggestion Kururi then I have no objections.”

Well I’ve obtained her consent, but I still didn’t do it. I could, but I really *really* didn’t want to.

I collected magic into the palm of my hand, and poured it into some nearby flowers.

Compared to last time though, this time I controlled it so that the magic only poured into the five that I designated.

“Those who are not visible to the naked eye, materialize.”

My magic was then absorbed into the flowers.

A sound that resembled a thousand ropes snapping reverberated from inside the earth, and just like last time the soil grew into a small hill before something had crawled out.

Unlike the hundred that I had summoned last time, this time I made sure to only make five.

“U~i!” “U~i!” “U~i!” “U~i!” “U~i!”

Just by looking at them I wanted to hold my head in shame.

Like last time, it was a radish with limbs with dug-in faces resembling that of old men. Another failure. I might have no

talent for this magic.

They spread out their short limbs and began to run around, as if to fully enjoy this world.

Five is enough, I’m not being suddenly attacked by the urge to kick them like last time.

“Kururi, what are these?”

Iris took alternating glances between me and the radish creatures, she was acting a little weird.

This is bad, they must’’ve been creepier than I thought.

“These are magic organisms. They’ll faithfully work for us so we can use them to plow the field.”

“They’re so cute!!!”

Iris screamed out as she caught one of them and hugged it.

“What is this?! It’s so cute!! Kururi, look! Aren’t these children just adorable?!”

“…”

I wonder what I’m feeling right now… I can’t describe it.

All I know is that I really want to kill these guys right now.

Hmm? You’re asking me whether I’m jealous of these guys? Jealous of a radish?

That would be my greatest shame. There’s no way I would lose to a radish!

The radish who was being hugged let out a little “U~i~” in an odious voice.

I heard that. He just said ‘U~i~’. I’m sure of it. They always say ‘U~i~’ when they’re expressing themselves.

Just don’t look at them Kururi, just keep yourself calm.

Don’t let their voices get to you, no matter how irritating they are.

I grasped the flower popping out of the radish’s head, the one that Iris was hugging, and tossed it.

“Now start working, we need to get this field ready quickly.”

“U~i!” “U~i!” “U~i!” The one that I just threw suddenly started a protest, but it wasn’t as threatening because there weren’t as many of them as there were last time. I can just ignore him.

“Hey! Kururi, you can’t do that, bullying these weak children like so…”

Eh?! She’s angry at *me?* Its that guy who…

“Don’t be so rough with them anymore, do you understand?”

“…yeah.”

The guy that I had just thrown was patted on the head gently by Iris. It slightly raised its body/chin at me, it almost felt like he was looking down on me. What the hell? What part of these damnable weeds are are cute?

As soon as the field is ready I’m immediately returning you to the ground! Just you wait radish!

Immediately after the two of us plus the five radishes started plowing the field.

We each had our own designated area to work on.

It was hard work plowing the field with a hoe, but it was pleasant feeling my sweat flow.

Doing things like this isn’t so bad every once in awhile, only studying is bad for the body, you need exercise sometimes.

I took a glance at the radishes, but they were working seriously. I guess they were faithful to my instructions this time.

If it’s like this, I can fully concentrate on my work!

At that moment one of the radishes fell over. It fell out of balance when it swung the hoe up.

Oh, it was the guy that I threw a little while ago.

Iris immediately rushed over to its side, and raised it up.

She gently stroked his head, paying careful attention to it.

“Sorry, I guess we worked you a little too hard, huh?”

As if to assert that there was no problem it let out a “U~i!” with a crisp face, and clung to her. I’ll get angry, you know?

“You’re so cute!!”

Iris hugged the radish lovingly.

Its face contorted nastily as it let out a “Wihihihi~” sound, more disgusting than any other radish I had ever seen before.

With all my strength I grabbed it.

With its head held tightly in my hand, I threw it away as far as I possibly could from Iris.

“Kururi?! What are you doing?!”

“Just now that guy went ‘Wihihihi~’, didn’t you hear that?!”

“I didn’t! So stop doing that Kururi! It’s not nice!”

“But… he said ‘Wihihihi’…”

After I was scolded by Iris, I tottered back to my work area. Glancing at the radish, I could see its condescending face twist into a smile again.

I kill you! You're only a radish! You're only alive because I allow you to be!

I thought work would proceed smoothly after that, but soon after another radish fell over in the same way.

Of course Iris rushed over there, and hugged it, showering it with love. How cunning, should I also pretend to fall?

"Wihihihi~"

"There! It absolutely said it right there! It went 'Wihihihi!'"

I ran over to warn Iris, but the one that was kicked out of the group then was me.

It did it! It totally did it! I swear!

For a while this cycle repeated itself, and I was kicked out of the group every time.

Damn radish. If it weren't for Iris you would already be soil by now.

Iris will be tainted by the radishes at this rate. Oh, how I hate them so.

What should I do? What can I do to save Iris?

“You need some herbicide?”

From another direction I wasn’t looking at, I heard a heavenly voice call out to me.

It was Toto, he seems to have understood the situation. You are a true friend, man.

Eventually I decided it would be better to just ignore the radishes for now.

They might be a pain, but just you wait until we’re done with work.
With that said, on this day I caused the biggest radish massacre in history.

| ToC |

Chapter 17

Even though exams were getting closer, I wasn’t able to focus on studying at all.

I was worrying about Toto’s prototype so much I ended up visiting the greenhouse almost every day.

Toto wasn’t any better though, “I don’t really care about my exam scores as long as I have my herbs.” or so he says.

Surprisingly, there was one more person who couldn’t focus because of their anxiety.

It was Iris.

“This isn’t any good, we have to focus on studying our exams.” I tried chiding her, but she ended up replying “I can’t help but worry about the vegetables though…” with upturned eyes.

In the end, the three of us spent all day, everyday taking care of the crops.

Iris seems to have been studying at late night to make up for it though, amazingly.

On the other hand, I can’t really concentrate because there’s always two strange people hanging out in my room.

I ended up asking them “Aren’t you two going to study?” and as if they just remembered the exams, the two of them put their training on hold to seriously review their notes.

…in my room of course.

Like that my peaceful day-to-day life continued on, until a certain incident happened.

It was just a normal day, but surprisingly I was the first one to arrive at the greenhouse that morning.

That’s rare.

Toto’s always here when I arrive, so this is a first.

As I pushed that thought aside, thinking that I should get to work on the crops, that’s when I noticed it.

Iris’ field behind the greenhouse had been ransacked. Everything had been dug up, or simply trampled on.

It was more harassment against Iris.

I felt like I was going to vomit at that moment. I couldn’t forgive this, an immense amount of anger started to well up inside me at that moment.

Clenching my fists, I forcefully pushed those feelings aside.

It wasn’t completely ransacked though, if we worked hard today to repair it we could still bounce back from this.

After pondering the matter for a bit, I noticed that the door to the greenhouse was open and rushed in.

I had never run faster in my life.

What was left of the greenhouse was even worse than the field.

Every herb was shredded into thousands of pieces, there wasn’t a single one intact.

“What about the face pack?!”

Remembering the most important herb, I hurried over to the specially humidified room we made for it.

“This can’t be…” the face pack plant seems to have been stolen. The others were destroyed, but it seems that they took this one away.

I didn’t feel anything this time, just an echoing sense of depression rather than anger.

My violent feelings had disappeared, leaving me tired again despite it still being the morning.

I sat down on the spot.

“Just… why?”

First I thought it was harassment against Iris, but after seeing what they did to the greenhouse there’s no way that’s the case.

What was their objective?

Were they trying to get to me? To Toto?

I thought it over again, but I couldn’t think of a logical reason.

…I don’t know, I just can’t think clearly right now.

For some reason I can’t help but resent myself for letting this happen.

Outside the greenhouse, I took in a big breath of air, but my mind didn’t clear at all though.

After a while, Iris finally appeared.

She ended up leaking out the same voice of grief that I did when she saw the wreckage.

“Why would they do this…”

I also want to know, but my mind draws a blank when I try to think of it.

“I don’t know.”

Taking Iris’ proposal, we decided it would be better for the two of us to clean this place up first and then think about it later.

“This is depressing.”

“Very depressing.”

“Kururi, that sad expression you’re making… I don’t like it, it doesn’t suit you. I’ll never forgive the people who did this.”

“…yeah.”

Iris called out to me a couple times with her gentle voice, but it didn’t really register in my mind.

Lets just go home and sleep already. I don’t want to think right now, that’s probably for the best.

“Toto?! What happened?! Are you okay?!”

Iris, who had been cleaning beside me until now, suddenly shouted out and ran off. Wondering what it was as I looked up, what entered my vision was the form of a completely tattered Toto.

“Toto?!” I immediately ran over.

“I’m so sorry Kururi… our important prototype is gone… but, but I can fix this! We still have the roots and the seeds! We just need to grow them again from the beginning! We can still do this!”

“That’s not important right now! What happened to you?!”

“Its nothing, don’t worry about it. Anyways, we’re going to be busy organising the greenhouse right? We can’t just leave it as it is, it’s almost summer vacation.”

Toto said so as he tried to enter the greenhouse, but I grabbed his hand.

No matter how you look at it, you got those wounds from a fight Toto, but if you can’t say it, I understand.

“Kururi… ” Iris called out to me with an uneasy face.

“Just leave it to me, but Iris, can wait out here for a bit?”

“Sure, of course I can.”

Passing through the entrance of the greenhouse, we started to work on the inside.

It was quiet for a while, the only thing that could be heard were the sounds of us busily moving around.

“…can you tell me what happened now?”

“This is great, it’s almost time for summer vacation to start. You really don’t mind me coming over to your territory this summer?”

“Toto, I want to hear about what happened to you.”

He hesitated for a second “…I-I can’t, sorry.”

We won’t make any progress at this rate, do you not want to talk about it that badly? And even so, can’t you at least look

at me in the eye when we speak?

“Is there a reason why you can’t tell me anything?”

“I’m sorry…”

Toto sounded like he was about to cry. I wonder what happened to make him like that? But if he really won’t say, I’m not going to pressure him any farther.

For some reason I was starting to feel depressed again.

Fu~ I let out a large breath and calmed down.

“Well, can you tell me how to organise these items? We can’t leave them all cluttered like this, right?”

Really, I should be taking my time to think about this, but I guess I’ll just finish this for now. That doesn’t mean I’m going to give up though.

“This sucks. We have to clean up this mess, and then after that regrow the face packs all over again. …sorry.”

“No, I understand.”

Toto was working while in tears. I didn’t want to see that expression on him though. Funny enough, it seems that before I knew it, I’ve grown really attached to all the weird people around me.

…and before we knew it, it was already nighttime. Iris herself stayed to help until late.

“I’ll stay here a little while longer, you guys have already planted the first seeds for the new batch of face packs, so you can go back already.”

“No, I’ll stay here to help.”

“Me too.”

“Iris, you have exams to study for. You should go home.”

“No! I’ll stay!”

Iris face twisted in anger. This is the first time I’ve seen her truly angry about something.

She sure is considerate, she was probably still worried about Toto.

“Well, I guess the three of us are just going to stay and work then.”

“No, I alone will be enough.”

His voice was a little sharp, but it’s Toto afterall. That sharpness showed that he was starting to cheer up.

Much better than the sad face he was making earlier.

Well, as long as he’s okay, I’m happy.

“Okay, let’s do this then.”

After putting our hands on top of each other, we continued to plant the seeds with newfound fighting spirit.

I carefully followed the seed sowing procedures as I planted them.

The other two were the same, but maybe because it was nighttime we had all grown quiet.

I tried to concentrate on my work, but my thoughts would always turn back to the events of today no matter what I did.

Everytime that happened I could feel anger and sadness wash over me, I wanted to question Toto for more information at those times.

Though that’s no good right now. Even if he’s not ready to talk about this now, he might talk to us in the future.

What should I do? Should I just leave this alone? I guess I haven’t really matured yet if I’m this impatient.

“Hey, Kururi!”

Around the time when it was completely dark, Vaine and Crossy could be seen rushing over.

They seemed to be carrying something.

“You weren’t coming back even though it was this late, so we came to you.” said Crossy worriedly.

The wife is here!

“Thanks, but what’s that in your hands?”

“Its dinner, I asked permission from the dining room to take it.”

Is this guy great or what? It’s nice to have a wife that’s so attentive!

“Thank you so much!”

After that, Iris, Toto and I finished off all of it. Its great to have food after a hard days work.

I could feel my strength coming back to me from the break.

“Now that we have full stomachs, things should get a little easier.”

“Your welcome, and hey, what’s with this mess?”

“…something happened.”

“A prank?”

“I don’t know.”

“How could they?! I won’t forgive anyone who messes with Shisho’s property! Just one word, and I’ll cut them down!”

What a horrible thing for Crossy to say. Completely different from what his cute appearance would suggest.

Well he is standing up for though, it’s not a bad feeling.

Sometimes you want to move the time being now, it does not have a movement so.

“I’d like to give the culprit a good slash myself.”

Well, I guess they’re lucky we don’t know. The scene of Crossy doing practice swings seems to have mortified Toto, who’s currently hiding the culprit.

It’d probably be best if I didn’t mention this now though.

“Well, I’m good for now Crossy.”

“But, Shisho…”

“This is the first time I’ve ever seen you with such a down expression Kururi. Just say the word, and my sword will go flying.”

As soon as I said I was fine without Crossy’s help, Vaine immediately decided to follow up.

Scary! These two guys are scary!

“I’m alright you guys, for now at least.”

“That won’t stop me from worrying, but if Kururi says so.”

“Oh, but can you guys help out with my work?”

“Yeah.”

“Of course! Anything for you Shisho!”

All five of us worked all night long that day.

By the time we had finally gone home, all the seeds were planted, and Iris’ field was restored.

The greenhouse was cleaned up, and Toto seemed to have gotten better “Now we’re done.”

* * *

The next morning though, my mood hadn’t gotten any better at all.

Rather, my body felt so heavy that day.

Did I grow fat again? Nope, I’d definitely notice if that was the case.

Was it because the weather was bad? No, it’s sunny outside.

I already know the real reason why but…

“What was this morning’s lesson about again?”

I wanted to sleep so bad, but somehow I was able to drag my lead-like body to class.

This isn’t good, the teacher’s lesson isn’t registering at all.

My body feels so heavy…

Maybe I should ask if I can leave early today.

“Kururi-kun, you almost look dead today.”

Rail approached me with a smile like usual.

Now that he’s here its going to be harder concentrating on today’s lesson.

Everyday he tries to approach me, and everyday I run away from him, but I don’t care today.

“Oh? You didn’t run away today? Does that mean that you’ve accepted me?”

What the hell is with that joke? Though I don’t really care today.

I mean, sure Rail does smell nice when you’re close to him, and he is handsome but, there’s no way he swings that way, right? It’s only a joke, right?

“A little bird told me something interesting recently. Apparently, a criminal going by the name of Toto Gapp-kun has recently vandalized the greenhouses. What’s your opinion on this Kururi.”

Rail told me a story, but it probably doesn’t matter.

He always goes on about useless stuff, why would it be anything different today?

I just don’t really care about anything today.

…wait. What?!

“Hey, what did you just say?”

“How terrible, you’re not interested in me at all. You’re only like this when I have information that you need. Am I that convenient of a woman to you?”

I grasped his shoulders and shook them, “Who cares?! Just tell me more about that thing you were speaking about before!”

“That hurts, please treat me gently! Its my first time!”

“Yeah I get it! You’re an idiot! So just tell me already!” This is important!

Even so, Rail continued to play around. ‘I really hate you, you know that?!’ I wanted to scream that out loud so bad!

“Because I’m the prince’s attendant, its only natural to have skills to collect information.”

He told me with his face flushed going ‘Kyaa~ it’s so embarrassing~!’ No, just tell me what you know already!

“I like you Kururi-kun, so I want to tell you, but it’s expensive to collect information you know? So I can’t just tell you for free.”

“Gold?! Do you want gold?! I have gold, so name your price!”

“Not really. What I really want is you Ku□ru□ri~”

I half strangled him at that comment.

“Sorry, I’m sorry! It was just a joke.”

I released my hand, but what followed sent shivers down my spine.

“Well for the information fee, how about one of Eliza’s letters you’ve recently received?” Rail said with a wink.

…you bastard, where did you hear this from?!

Goosebumps started creeping up and down my whole body.

“You’ve even seduced Eliza huh? You really are amazing Kururi, you continue to exceed my expectations every time. Of course I’d want to read the letters you’ve been exchanging.”

“…just the letter right? Understood.”

I was wavering. This is embarrassing. Really embarrassing, but I need to know the truth about yesterday.

My personal shame doesn’t matter compared to this!

It doesn’t matter! It doesn’t matter! It doesn’t matter! I tried saying a mantra three times to convince myself.

“You’ll really do it? That was also just a joke you know? I was going to give you the information for free, and yup, here you go.”

Rail took an envelope out of his pocket.

“Don’t look at it until you’re sure you want to know the truth. I wrote all the details in it.”

“Is this okay?”

“It’s fine, I like Kururi-kun afterall.”

I received the letter from Rail, and stuffed it in my pocket.

It would probably bring trouble if I opened it in class, so I should check it out later.

I’m really curious though, what was Toto hiding?

After giving it serious thought, I realized that Rail had collected this information because he knew this was something I would want to know about.

And so, here he came.

I will surely look over its contents later on.

To Rail, I felt like I had to say this.

“Thanks Rail. I will definitely repay this kindness one day.”

“I’ll look forward to that day then. Oh, and if you take back those words, you’re definitely going to hell you know? Ahh~ I wonder what I should hope for.”

Shivers ran down my spine for the nth time.

What the hell have I just gotten myself into?!

| ToC |

Chapter 18

After returning to my room, I immediately opened the seal on the envelope and took a look at the paper inside.

This was the report that was described on the paper:

Perpetrators:

- *Leader: Maury Gapp*
- *Followers: Tomilu Gain, Ryan Christopher*

Details of Event:

- *Around 16:00 the three mentioned above had trespassed into the greenhouse.*
- *After being caught by Toto Gapp, a dispute broke out inside.*
- *Maury was then seen exiting the building holding something that looked like a plant.*

- *The fields were then vandalised by the three, fleeing the scene after.*
- *Toto Gapp then proceeded to intercept them, but they were too fast and got away.*
- *Tomilu, and Ryan have both been confirmed to not have a direct relationship with Toto.*
- *Toto is confirmed to be part from the branch family of Maury's noble line. Toto was unilaterally targeted because of this relationship.*

That is all, at the time this report was created.

I will ask for the usual remuneration for payment.

Before that though, I will request something to investigate the relationship between Eliza Deauville and Kururi Helan, of course, this will only be a joke.

Thank you for your payment.

Hey! What the hell's with that end?!

Bastard!

Even so, this is a surprise. I didn't know he had this kind of information network.

Well, this is a good thing if you disregard the end. Putting aside my complaints, this really is a great report.

If I had to describe my feelings after reading the report in one word.

It would be ‘anger’.

Judging by the contents, this is obviously an attack on Toto.

Moreover, this is just another way for him to exploit his position as part of the head family.

He didn’t even fight Toto one-on-one. There’s no way the Toto who doesn’t exercise much would be able to fend off three people.

Toto even gave chase afterwards and became tattered because of it.

Somehow, I see Toto’s pain in the palm of my hand.

It’s frustrating.

This report is really concise and easy to understand though, I think I might ask him again if I need more info on something.

Now who should I show this too…

No, that’s not enough for what they did.

I can’t forgive them! I’m going to get revenge on the three of them for sure!

They’re the reason why Toto couldn’t open up to us. It wasn’t his fault! The impact of what could happen between their families would be too severe. It was smart of him to give up the pursuit.

Well, when it gets down to it, this means that I can’t afford to just fight them directly. My relationship with Toto is already known, so that means if I do anything, it’ll automatically be linked back to Toto.

I can’t just stay silent and let things be though, I have no intention to forgive them for what they’ve done.

They might decide to continue their harassment if I leave them alone.

I need to take action!

After thinking about it for a while, I couldn’t think of any good ideas.

No matter what I do, it would always end up with them linking it back to Toto.

I don’t think about these things very often after all, I’m a pacifist.

How pathetic, I can’t even think of one way to take revenge for a friend.

I went to sleep that day thinking this over.

Falling asleep was worse, it made me recall a bunch of things.

I ended up having a nightmare that night.

Once morning came, after checking myself in the mirror I realized I was deathly pale.

That dream I say last night was awful, it gave me chills just remembering it. It would give goosebumps to someone on a warm day.

Its definitely a dream I don’t want to see again.

…it was a good idea though, for a nightmare.

Reflected in the mirror was my face breaking out into a grin. It might’ve been a nightmare, but it was a good dream,

“Alright.”

Let’s try this out.

As the day went by, I set out to look for Maury Gapp in the classrooms.

It took a while, but eventually I was told that he was a student from the D-class.

I immediately went to confirm this, and there he was!

A guy with a cleft chin and flowing blond hair. That’s definitely Maury, no doubt about it.

What a damnable-looking face. I wanted to punch it just by looking at it.

No, wait… calm down Kururi. This and that are separate matters, I need to be calm.

Once school finished, I hurriedly ran to Class D to track down Maury.

In the end, I found him leaving with his two-person entourage out of the classroom.

I then proceeded to follow them, doing my best to be sneaky.

Eventually arriving at a deserted corner of the school building.

This is their usual hangout spot, you’ll see them gather here from time to time.

Apparently it’s also the place where they kept the goods they stole from Toto, the face pack plant was there, completely withered. There’s no way that it could be used now.

“Wasn’t the face that Toto made yesterday absolutely hilarious? He was crying so desperately for us to give this back, what a fool.” Maury said so as his entourage began to laugh.

‘What a humble guy’ I thought sarcastically.

“Whatever the case, this plant seems to have a great monetary worth to it! We’ll make a killing once it grows up!”

“Let’s do it, it’s already ours isn’t it?”

“Yeah, hahaha~”

Well not anymore.

I was clenching my teeth in response to the laughing of the trio.

Using transformation magic, I took on the appearance of one of the radish magic organisms.

A human-sized one.

Complete with a gross old-man’s face, and short unnatural limbs.

This is probably the biggest shame in my life, taking on such a grotesque appearance.

Why would I do such a thing you ask? Well, this is what happened to me in my dream last night.

I was attacked by a giant radish that wanted to get revenge on me for my herbicide massacre.

It was horrible, no matter how I begged forgiveness it continued to beat on me in revenge.

I shudder just by thinking about it.

Well, it did give me this idea on how to humiliate these guys.

“U~i, are you having fun?”

“W-what the hell are you?!”

The trio jumped up in surprise to my sudden appearance.

There is no such thing as mercy in my vocabulary right now, I’m going to give these guys hell.

“U~i, this is divine punishment for destroying all those herbs the other day.”

“How stupid, I don’t remember doing anything like that.”

One of the grunts threw those words at me, he probably doesn’t believe that this fairy-tale like situation is actually happening right now.

Well, it’s time for them to learn of their mistake.

It’s time to resort to violence!

I slammed my fist into the Maury’s face, blowing him away.

The grunts just stood there in shock, amazed at the powerful blow to the jaw I just dished out.

Maury grumbled “Get him…” as he tried to get up.

I wasn’t going to just let them attack me though, so I threw another punch into the grunt’s nose as I turned around.

“Ahhhh!!!”

That person fell while letting out a heartbreaking sound.

Grunt #2 wasn’t any harder to beat.

While I was distracted though, Maury took this opportunity and jumped me from behind.

I was somehow inverted mid-fall and was completely pinned down.

He rode on top of my belly, and began throwing punches at my face over and over again.

“Die! Die! Die! Die!” With every fist he threw down more verbal abuse. I was able to hold on for a little while, but at this rate…

This is bad, I won’t be able to keep the transformation up!

I need to change the situation!

Parrying one of the fists he swung down, I grabbed at it and twisted it with all my might.

“Owowow, that hurts!”

Maury’s face twisted in pain, while I pushed him off me and escaped.

As a result, I was somehow able to escape that bad situation there.

I hope you enjoyed beating because now…

It’s my turn.

“Dammit, just die already!”

To the me who had started to fight back again, Maury whipped out his hand and release flame magic.

Magic in a hand-to-hand fight is taboo!! Is what I thought, but I guess in his point of view he’s being attacked by a monster rather than another person. So I guess it’s more like self-defense then.

Flame magic caught onto the grass growing on my head.

“Hothothothothot! Uwawawawawawawawa~!”

I struggled to put it out, but I couldn’t reach it because of my short arms.

Realizing the this struggle was useless, I put it out by using a spell.

My human figure than appeared with a ‘Poof!’

“You’re… Kururi Helan! Haha, did you come to take revenge for a loser like Toto? Hahaha!”

Oops, that wasn’t supposed to happen.

Also it seems like they know about my relationship with Toto.

“Toto didn’t ask me to do this.”

“Do you think we’re stupid? We know all about your friendship, so after beating you up, we’ll strangle him just to the point before he croaks, to make sure he **never** messes with us again.”

“He really is uninvolved this time! This was all my idea!”

“Lies! As if we could believe that.”

“I’ll apologise for this, so beat me up all you want. Just leave Toto alone!”

“Oh? What a wonderful friendship, then I guess we’ll just have beat you up too!”

Smiling as they said that. I was suddenly hit with something at the back of my head, something that let out a sharp noise.

This is the first time I’ve ever felt this way. My fists were clenched and trembling at this feeling.

Maury sent a kick into my stomach and I went flying.

A dull sound cracked out when I fell. I think I might’ve just broken something.

This isn’t good though, I’m not sure how much of this I’ll be able to take.

“How about a deal then? We don’t really want to hurt you, but at the same time, we can’t just let this matter go as if it was nothing, right? Swear on your name as Kururi Helan. Handover Toto so he can get his punishment for this, punishment for biting the main house that has taken care of him all this time, and punishment for daring to be related to me in the first place!”

“Go to hell.”

I retorted with a whisper at the last moment, but they didn’t really like that response.

The three of them started to surround me, their fists clenched and ready to be swung.

Sorry Toto…

My plan was too shallow, I ended up involving you even though you tried to stay out of it so badly. I have no choice but to do this now, no matter how shameless it is.

“I’m sorry.”

I gently let out those words before activating my magic.

* * *

That day I was called to the teacher’s office.

I was reported for carrying out violence.

Needless to say, I was the one punished for starting it.

There was no excuse, so I just took whatever they threw at me head on.

I was to be locked up in the punishment room for three days because of this.

They call it a room, but it’s more of a cell really.

With that said, being locked up in it for three days to encourage reflection isn’t the worst punishment they could’ve given me.

Now I have three days to relax.

After entering the punishment room, I have all the time to think in the world about whether my actions were right or not.

I don’t think I was in the wrong, but that’s useless now. Might as well think about something else.

After school, Toto ended up paying me a visit.

“I heard about it. You got into a fight with Maury, didn’t you?”

I didn’t answer Toto’s question. I couldn’t even look at him.

“To recklessly start a fight with three people like that, you really are brave, you know that?”

“…sorry.”

“Please don’t blame yourself, I’m actually really grateful for what you did.”

I raised my head to look at Toto, completely surprised by his words.

“You thought I’d be angry? At first I was surprised yeah, but you know I’m not stupid enough to get angry at a friend who started a fight thinking about my well-being.”

“…but now you’re going be involved with a bunch of annoying stuff, right?”

“I’m not going to die from something like that though. Certainly, its going to be hard in my territory for a little while, but this is much better than before. My mood has been clearer than its ever been before, and I’m really glad about that.”

Toto said so while showing me a rare refreshing smile.

We talked for a bit before he had to leave.

Now that he was gone, I had nothing else to do, so I started thinking again.

He was like that because… I guess it’d be better if I didn’t answer this now.

I don’t really want to think right now.

That’s good, what I did wasn’t useless afterall.

Soon it’ll be seven, meaning it’s almost time for my evening rice.

It’s a little regrettable that I only get rice for dinner, but this is a punishment after all.

As I thought that, the door to the room had opened. Alright, it’s time for the rice!

“I passed the interview, so they allowed me to deliver a meal.”

“Eliza?!”

The person who entered while carrying a meal was Eliza.

Why?! I wasn’t just anxious about the meal she had, but about Eliza herself.

A meal? What? Why is Eliza here?

Maybe because it’s been awhile since the last time I ate, but I was more focused on the food she was holding there rather than herself.

I was *that* hungry.

“Eliza, why are you-”

“Its because I thought that you’d be bored in this place. Here, I brought my favourite book for you to read, I know you’ll enjoy it.”

“Oh, thanks. ‘The Flower Prince’ huh? …wait, isn’t this a fairy tale?”

“It is, but the contents of it are surprisingly dark.”

“Thanks anyway, it really is boring here, you know? So this will really help.”

“Well, I thought you might need it.”

Eliza let out a small giggle.

My impression of Eliza has completely changed from the calm image I had of her from before.

At first you would think she’s quite the cold person just by her looks, but if you actually got to know her, you would find that she’s actually quite the softy.

Looking at her pretty face that was happily smiling, my heart went and skipped a beat.

“Kururi, I’ve come to visit you.”

At that moment, as if to break that good atmosphere we had, came in Iris with her usual smile.

“Ah.”

Immediately aware of Eliza’s presence, Iris’s expression had hardened.

“S-sorry, am I interrupting something?”

“No, its nothing. I’m actually really glad you came.”

“Really? Well pardon my intrusion then.”

She entered while saying so and sat down next to Eliza.

“So Eliza-san came here as well… I believe this is the first time we’ve actually talked face-to-face, I’m Iris, but you already knew that right?”

Iris’ slightly cold voice made the atmosphere even more uncomfortable as it was.

“Well, I had an idea.”

While Eliza’s sharp response just made it worse.

…I wonder what’s this unpleasant feeling that’s building up right now?

“Anyways, because you didn’t come to class today, I brought a copy of my notes for you.”

“Your notes?! Thanks!! I was a bit worried about missing classes with the exams so close, but I should be able to survive with this, thank you!”

“Don’t worry about it, I knew that you would want these.”

“You sure are attentive Iris, you’ll surely become a great bride someday.”

She responded with a “I don’t really know about that…” as she blushed while fiddling with her hair.

Iris seemed to be really happy from my praise.

“It’s a bit late, but why don’t you eat your meal now?”

Eliza asked me.

“I’ll do that later, I can’t just eat alone while you two are here. Maybe I’ll just study a bit for now.”

“As in, you’re going to start using those notes?”

Ugh, what am I supposed to say in this situation?!

“I always read a bit before I go to bed, so I don’t see why I should stop now. Well, I’m also looking forward to reading ‘The Flower Prince’ book you gave me as well.”

“Is that so?”

Eliza’s mood seems to have lightened up just now.

“Kururi… you got into a fight today, right? I heard it from Rail, I know that you did it while thinking about Toto, so I know that you weren’t in the wrong! No, after I heard about it, I thought you were really cool at that moment, I really did!”

Iris suddenly cut into the conversation, and started talking about today’s events.

Well, Iris was also angry about what happened to Toto. Contrary to my expectations, she actually seems happy with what I did.

“I can’t really say that was the best thing for me to do though. I ended up being a bother to Toto. After all, if I did nothing then he wouldn’t have gotten caught up into this family feud any further.”

“Of course you did the right thing! I believe you did!”

Now Eliza’s cutting into the conversation. Why?

“I also thought you were cool…”

She said with a low voice I could barely hear. I wonder why she’s so tense right now?

“You definitely did the right thing Kururi, I believe in you.”

Eliza said so with her eyes closed.

“I said I believed in you first…”

Iris followed up while looking away.

“Yeah uh, thanks.”

To this painful air that seemed to flow around them, I was somehow able to squeeze out a response.

“Kururi, we’re here.”

“Huh? Why’s it so quiet?”

Vaine and Crossy suddenly entered as well.

It looks like they’ve noticed the weird atmosphere here too.

Well, I guess now that they’re here things will get better, right?

| ToC |

Chapter 19

My spring school life had gone by in a flash, and most topics talked about in school had turned towards the end of the semester exams.

The test results are coming out today. Comprehensively, this along with the results of the exams before winter break will decide what class you’re admitted to next year, so of course everyone is going to desperately study for them. Some people even had bloodshot eyes.

While the delusion of everyone here and there To rest, probably waiting for the test results.

As soon as they’re done announcing the exam results, summer vacation will start.

There are some people who stay at the school, while other return to their homes. Two whole months where we can do whatever we want.

There were eight exams, each worth a 100 points for a total on a 800-point scale.

Elective exams were carefully regulated so that the students wouldn’t complain that one was more difficult than the other. People still ended up complaining though, thats just the way the world works.

The results were posted before noon, many of them were placed as expected.

First Place: Arc Kudan 800 points

First Place: Iris Parala 800 points

Third Place: Eliza Deauville 799 points

Fourth Place: Rail Rain 797 points

–

–

–

Seventh Place: Kururi Helan 777 points

As expected of Iris. Despite the work that she had to do on the field, she still scored full marks.

The prince as well.

Eliza seems to have stumbled again though, just one point away from first.

The one I’m actually surprised about is Rail.

There were many changes this time due to people not studying, but the hardest class to study for out of them all, was medicine!

From the twenty-three points that I lost, fifteen of those were from medicine.

I was so close too! I had the second highest score in that class!

Yet somehow that guy was still able to pull off a perfect 100 points! I will never forgive him for that!

Well, I still hold a little bit of a grudge from all the times he’s harassed me too.

I guess these are the results of not-studying enough though, it’s only natural they’d end up like this..

Now that I’ve seen the results, I should start preparing myself to go home.

There are some things I have to do before that though.

First I received thirty pieces of what was harvested from the potted face pack plants that Toto had grown, placing them in the horse drawn cart to mail them back.

Toto won’t be able to come to my territory this summer, he has to go back home to his own. I can safely say that I’m not going to see him for a while now, at least that’s what he said when we parted..

Ever since the fight, it looks like the harassment from Maury has stopped. I don’t know if it’ll start again in the future, but

the person in question said that it’ll be alright. I sincerely hope that that is true.

Eliza of course, was frustrated by the results, complaining to the point that I almost mistook her as angry, rather than just frustrated. Although it looks like the Four Heavenly Kings are increasing their security around me, my relationship with Eliza seems to be progressing quite smoothly. Also, it looks like Eliza is returning home to the Capital City. She ended up cautioning me to watch my physical health, since I was just recently injured. “The Flower Prince” book I had borrowed from her earlier was also returned.

I was actually a really good story, it even made me cry a little bit.

I don’t even want to remember Rail’s story, but I ended up hearing something funny from him.

After tentatively greeting me, Rail relentlessly tried his best to give me a hug.

I really don’t want to remember this.

What did he tell me what was so funny you ask?

You see, I ended up promising to keep in touch with him, because at the very least, he’s useful when you need to find out information about things, and in return he told me this:

“The prince was rejected by Iris recently.” Apparently he had invited Iris to come home with him to the capital to meet the king, but she ended up refusing, saying that she’d feel

uncomfortable surrounded by all that luxury despite the fact that she was just a humble commoner only two months ago. I think I laughed a little too hard when I heard this. I sure am a horrible person, aren't I?

Even so, I agree that his invitation was too sudden and poorly planned.

Oh, and it seems Rail is returning with Arc to the Capital.

The Capital, huh? I heard that its commercial market is flourishing right now, I want to visit there someday.

Anyways, I ended up paying Iris a visit myself in the end.

I heard that Iris was just going to spend her vacation alone here at school.

She wouldn't be troubled with food, clothing, or shelter, and she also has the library to pass the time, but two months is far too long to spend alone. It's too sad, so I wanted to lend her a hand.

"Iris."

I called out to Iris who was watering the vegetables in the field.

"Hey Kururi, look at this! The vegetables we planted are beginning to bud already! They sure grow fast, don't they?"

"Yeah, that's pretty impressive."

Like she said, the vegetables were already starting to bud.

I’m looking forward to their future growth as well.

“Iris, are you doing anything this summer vacation?”

“I’m probably just going to stay here at school, but it’s not all bad you know? I’ll have all the time to study that I want, and I need to take care of these children too. Also, I can’t afford a carriage home right now, you know?”

I laughed a little at her answer.

“I thought so too. So if you want to, do you want to come back with me to the Helan territory for the summer?”

She shook her head. “Sorry, but I can’t go. I’m sure your territory is a nice place, but I don’t want to be a bother. If I’m going to visit, I’d rather visit after raising the money to visit the hot springs myself, that’s my dream.”

“Were you going to bring your family too?”

“Yeah.”

“Then, what if you were just going to go by yourself?”

“By myself? Probably not.”

“Well how about this then, do you want a summer job? You said that you didn’t want to be a nuisance, but did you know that my territory is actually suffering from a lack of manpower recently? It sure would be great to have some extra workers to lighten the load…”

She gulped. Yup, easy-peasy.

“With a part-time job, you’d be able to pay for it yourself and your family would be welcome to stay too. If it’s the vegetables that you’re worried about, we can ask the Herbalism instructor to take care of them. We’re in school to study together, but summer vacation was created precisely because we needed a time where we didn’t have to study! So? Will you reconsider my offer?”

“…a little bit. No, wait! Let me think about this!”

For a little while she just groaned while rubbing her head, before turning to me.

“For the next two months I’ll help you out. I’ll make sure to not be a bother because I’ll be working there as well, so once again, thank you!”

“How could you ever be a nuisance? Well, let’s leave after I greet Vaine and Crossy.”

“I’m only doing this because it’s my obligation to do so! Don’t forget that!”

Hohoho (sfx: haughty laugh) I don’t know what you’re talking about. My face right now is like that of a buddha.

After that, the two of us bid farewell to the field for the summer.

After returning to the dorms, I visited Vaine’s room with Iris beside me.

“Vaine, the two of us are about to leave for the Helan territory, do you want to come with? I need some more people to help out with the territory.”

“Is that okay? I was actually going to travel the mountains and forests because I had nowhere else to go this summer. You sure you want me to go?”

At first I really was coming here just to say goodbye, but that seemed to change since, now that I think about it, I really do need the extra workers to help out this summer.

It’d be great if Vaine could come along too, he’d be able to match a hundred men in power.

…wait. The mountains and forests?! Is that how you usually spend your summer?!

“Well, let’s go together then. I don’t think Crossy will refuse, but… do you know where his room is?”

“I don’t know, he never brought me there.”

I thought that you two were always together though? Did you guys only ever meet in my room? That’s unexpected, did he already leave?

“He was a boy? I thought that Crossy was a girl though?” Iris said.

“It’s a little rude, so make sure not to mention it to him in person.”

“That’s right Iris.” Vaine uncharacteristically warned her, he didn’t even ask her to start doing practice swings to reflect on herself.

Iris was surprisingly insensitive about these things.

At that moment, Crossy had entered into Vaine’s room.

“Shisho, you’re here too? What’s the occasion?”

“Oh, this is good, we were just about to start looking for you, Crossy.”

“Me?”

“The three of us are going to the Helan territory over the summer, I wanted to know if you wanted to come too.”

“Sorry, but I can’t. I need to say my farewell greetings to the instructors today. I want to go, but the feeling is enough, I hope you still have a fun summer though.” Crossy said so with a sullen face.

This is making me restless for some reason, Crossy has always been together with Vaine. I really wanted him to come, but I guess it can’t be helped.

“I see, well I hope you have a fun summer vacation then. Take care yourself, okay?”

“Of course, Shisho! I’ll definitely take care of myself, so make sure you do so as well Shisho! You as well, you bastard!”

He threw that last part at Vaine.

What? Did the two of them break up with each other?

They just aren’t honest now are they?

After that, we all prepared our luggage, and packed them into the horse drawn carriage.

Iris and I had brought quite a bit with us, but all of Vaine’s belongings could be carried in one hand.

Does he really keep all his stuff in that one bag? Is it a bottomless bag that stores things in another dimension?

This is how Vaine, Iris and I all departed for the Helan territory.

In the carriage, the three of us leisurely enjoyed the journey.

I remember feeling anxious when I first came to school here.

Many things have happened since then, alot of sad things, happy things, and weird things, but it was a fun period of time.

While reminsicing about the past, I slowly closed my eyes.

A vivid memory slowly formed an image in my head.

It was the time when Eliza was seriously trying to kill me, how fun.

Wait. Is that really a fun memory for me?

Outside the sun had continued to rise, while the horse-drawn carriage rumbled as it proceeded towards the Helan territory.

| ToC |

Chapter 20

First Princess Maria’s POV

The second-year’s examination results have been posted.

The student’s ranks had changed here and there, but there were also a few that either skyrocketed up or slid way down from their original rank.

There are a few students whose results were extraordinary, though.

In particular, the students who placed from first to fourth this time.

And of course, one of those four is I, Maria Kudan

As a person blessed with excellent grades, athletic ability, and beauty, I’m am one of the few ‘elite’ in society, though life can get a little boring sometimes.

There’s just not enough stimulus in my life.

Anyways, because I didn’t want to stay at school any longer, I tentatively decided to return home to the Capital.

If I was going to go somewhere, I didn’t really want to go home, but everyone would get all noisy and start yelling at me if I just decided to take a trip.

Ah! Oh alas! I guess I’ll be bored this summer as well.

I really don’t want to go back home, one of the places I want to visit is actually the Helan territory.

I’d rather go there than the Capital.

Certainly, its commercial facilities are thriving but I don’t really feel the need to go shopping right now.

That is *not* how I want to spend my summer vacation.

Anyways, as I spent my days bored out of my mind this summer, I was suddenly summoned by Mother.

Apparently, there’s going to be a gathering of princesses from a bunch of neighboring countries here.

And I’m supposed to be our country’s representative.

I don’t really want to do such a thing, I want to go to the Helan territory’s new summer resort.

Eventually, the day came and a tea party was held in the castle gardens.

Around the table, there were about ten girls drinking tea while chatting, including myself.

Oh, look! Somebody just told a boring story, so now we can all laugh and go ‘Ohohohohohoho~’

What’s that? Someone else just told a boring story? Now let’s all laugh and go ‘Ohohohohohoho~’

My stomach was twisting in disgust from the mood, and this is just the start.

Hopefully, this finishes quickly.

As I thought that in the middle of our ‘Ohohohohoho~’ tournament, somebody with a cute face had suddenly appeared.

“Nice to meet you, my name is Lasa Kudan. Sorry for interrupting you.”

“Oh, Lasa.”

I stood up to greet him.

Unlike Arc, Lasa is my cute little brother.

“I was actually about to head over to the Helan territory, so I came here to give my salutations to Ane-sama before I departed.”

“Eh? You’re going to the Helan territory?” …I want to go too.

There’s no way I can just let him leave me in this hell hole, I don’t want to be stuck here with all these princesses!

Falling to my desires by leaving for the Helan territory while abandoning my duties as this country’s princess.

It’ll be difficult, but that doesn’t mean it’s impossible.

“Lasa, can you wait a little bit? I want to go as well.”

I secretly whispered into Lasa’s ear.

“Is that okay?”

Lasa said with a worried undertone.

“It’s fine.”

“Ow! That hurts! My stomach!”

I rammed my knee into his stomach at an angle that the others couldn’t see.

He fell to the ground on his knees with one hand propping himself up, while the other was rubbing his stomach.

“Are you alright?!”

The daughters of the other countries royalty who were just enjoying their tea a few moments ago ran up to us in worry.

Well after his outburst, it’s only natural they’d do that.

“Nee-san…”

Lasa looked up to me with the whites of his eyes showing, but well, let’s just forget the details.

“Are you alright? Is your stomach acting up again? We both know that you’ve had bad bowel movements lately, you should take care of yourself more.”

I said that in a voice loud enough for the rest of the princesses to hear, telling them that my brother is having a constipation problem. Do I feel any shame for doing this? Absolutely not. I’ll do whatever I want to do.

“No, my stomach is fine but- Owowowowow! Nevermind, I think I need someone to call a doctor.”

“I can give you first aid while everyone searches for one.”

“Thanks, but until the doctor comes don’t think you’ll be able to do much.”

“Here, I’m going to do a quick check, okay? So let touch your stomach for a bit… Oh no, I think you’ve stretched something, it’s probably because you’ve let gas accumulate inside too much that this has happened.”

Maybe it’s because they had drunk too much tea while listening to boring stories that some of them had gotten waterlogged stomachs and started letting out splashing sounds.

Whatever you do Lasa, don’t fart.

“Maria-sama, we understand your embarrassment because of your family right now. You can excuse yourself if you wish.”

“There’s no way I could do such a thing!” I need to keep up my image first, I can’t just dash out at the first exit!

What a desperate excuse, telling everyone my brother’s constipated. If someone were to find out that I actually kneed him, as the princess of this country dark clouds would hang over me for the rest of my life.

This has to work no matter what!

“Umm Princess Irina, I believe it would be alright if you didn’t worry so much. My sister is just this kind of person.”

Lasa squeezed out his opinion, you traitor! How could you?!

“What are you saying?! Aren’t you Maria-sama’s brother?! Are you not ashamed of embarrassing her so?!”

Princess Irina told Lasa off with an angry voice.

Lasa then started to scratch his head while making a troubled face.

I’m sorry Lasa.

I know you don’t deserve Princess Irina’s wrath.

“I’ve brought a doctor over!”

Somebody called out while bringing a doctor with them, who ran ahead and rushed over here.

The doctor immediately went to work, checking his abdomen and neck.

I don’t really know what he’s doing.

Well I don’t really care, since he won’t be able to find the cause.

If the doctor can’t find the cause, Lasa will be told that he should go get some more rest back at his room.

Then after I leave with him because I’m ‘worried’, the two of us will escape from his room and take a quick trip over to the Helan territory!

Before that, I’ll make sure to inform grandfather that I’m going to stay in Lasa’s room to watch over his physical condition and that this will probably last until the other princesses go home!

Its perfect!

“Hmm, I can’t figure out what’s wrong. For the time being, he should probably go and get some rest in his room, but if you’re really worried, I can do a more detailed examination, would you like that Maria-sama?”

A perfect diagnosis. I should go and ask father to raise your salary later.

“Yeah, the pain has subsided a little, but for now, I think I’m going to rest in my room.”

“I’ll go watch over you, to make sure you’re alright.”

Mission complete. Now we just need to jump out of your room’s window, and then we can spend the rest of our summer in the Helan territory’s resort!!

Lasa, who seems to have given himself up, sighed.

Now that we’ve gotten this far, that attitude of yours is no good. As I thought about such things, I sent a glare over to Lasa.

“Please wait one moment!!”

Princess Irina suddenly stopped us while raising her voice. What now?

“Let me go watch over him too, I’m a bit worried myself.”

Ugh, what a busybody.

“No, we wouldn’t want to disturb you. Everyone, please continue to enjoy the tea party even after we depart.”

“I can’t allow that. There’s no way I can leave a person whose condition has worsened in my immediate vicinity alone. It’ll only leave me more worried, I can’t leave you to do this by yourself Maria-sama.”

“…yeah.”

* * *

After taking over the conversation, the three of us headed over to Lasa’s room.

Together with us in his room, Lasa lied down on the bed.

Irina, who was here to nurse him pulled a chair over and sat down.

Be brave Lasa. Be friendly, but what am I supposed to do in this situation?!

This whole situation is so boring! I was supposed to be leaving by now!

“In truth, I noticed Maria-sama’s intentions quite a while ago.”

Hmm? Princess Irina suddenly started speaking with a meek look on her face.

“He’s acting, right? He’s not really hurt, is he?”

Eh?! My expression had probably hardened in response to her unexpected words.

“No…he really is sick, Ohohohohoho~”

“I’m not going to blame you or anything, I figured out what you had been trying to do from the very beginning.”

“What? Really?”

“Really, you did all that because you were bored, right? You looked like you wanted to go somewhere.”

“Then, why did you do that back then?”

“‘Because a lot of problems would pop up if I said my true feelings at that moment’, right? I’m sure that you felt the same way when you started that whole commotion.”

“Irina-sama…”

“Maria-sama…”

“You want to leave too?”

“Where though?”

“There’s actually this place famous for its hot springs called the Helan territory. They just opened their new summer resort, and I think it would be a lot of fun there.”

“That sounds nice, I want to go too, but do you have a way out of here?”

“We can leave from the window of course, all you need to get down from there is a rope.”

“Hehehe, this is somewhat exciting, isn’t it?”

The two of us laughed for a little while.

I wonder how long it’s been since I’ve felt this way?

This is fun.

Actually, this might be the first time I’ve met somebody who has understood me so well for the first time in my life.

That’s the feeling I’m getting right now.
“Umm… then can we just leave already then? I was actually supposed to depart quite a while ago.” Lasa suddenly said, breaking the mood.

| ToC |